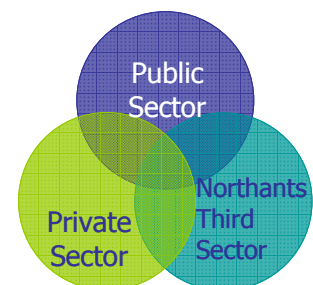


Northamptonshire's Third Sector Partnership Agreement



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1. Background to the Partnership Agreement

Since March 2006 the Infrastructure Steering Group for Northamptonshire has been working together to create a forward plan for the development of infrastructure agencies and their services offered to front line **third sector** agencies within Northamptonshire. ("Third Sector" has now replaced the term "Community Voluntary Sector")

During this time the views of representatives of this group have been gathered to:

- understand what the perceived relative strengths and weaknesses of the Consortium have been to date
- review and discuss the above findings in an open and honest fashion
- consider emerging influences on the development of infrastructure (e.g. Local Area Agreements (LAA))
- debate the needs and priorities of the Steering Group going forward
- take the associated findings forward to inform the development of a new plan for the Steering Group
- create a partnership Agreement and terms of reference (Steering Group) for onward sharing across the third sector in Northamptonshire.

2. Method of Approach

This piece of work was designed to engender and improve open dialogue within the Northamptonshire Infrastructure Steering Group and going forward to create a communication structure for the whole VCS and their stakeholders. Over the last 4 months the following approach has been undertaken:

1. Survey to all Consortium Steering Group Members (March 2006)
2. Report highlighting key findings from survey to Consortium Group (March 2006)
3. Facilitated Workshop 1 (28 June 2006) and Workshop 2 (13 July 2006)
4. Draft partnership plan and Terms of Reference for the Steering Group (July 2006)
5. An open consultation period for the sector to respond to the Partnership Agreement, which was opened on 22nd February 2007 and closed on 21st May 2007
6. 12 month development period to; monitor, evaluate, make amendments and develop the necessary processes for appointing 3rd sector representatives.
7. The partnership agreement and Terms of Reference were communicated to the wider third sector at a countywide communication event in June 2007, thus ensuring the widest visibility of the work plan of the Consortium Steering Group.

Note: The Consortium Steering Group and the Third Sector Infrastructure Steering Group are now replaced by the Northamptonshire Infrastructure Consortium.

3. Statement of Collaborative Working

Partners agree to:

- Work collaboratively and develop strategic plans for the continuous improvement of Third Sector Infrastructure Investment in Northamptonshire
- Work collaboratively, thereby making the best use of available resources and ensuring value
- Promote awareness and understanding of the Partnership and its role within the Third Sector and with other relevant stakeholders
- Work together to realise the goals set down in the Partnership Agreement.
- Engage in open and honest dialogue with other partners where listening is as important as talking

In all that it does the Partnership and its constituent members will seek to be:

- Transparent
- Accountable
- Fair
- As consultative as possible
- As inclusive as possible

(Information: This partnership agreement has no **legally binding ties**, but sets out how the third sector will work collaboratively and in partnership and in the spirit of **Good Practice and Fairness**)

4. Vision of the Partnership

'To be a Strong, Sustainable and innovative Third Sector¹ in Northamptonshire.'

¹ It was agreed that the term 'Third Sector' would encompass the widest definition of activity within the voluntary and community sector, including the emergence of social enterprise initiatives and community interest organisations – however agreement on using this term is subject to the wider consultation taking place.

5. The Partnership

The Partnership has four Component structures:

- Northamptonshire Infrastructure Consortium
- Third Sector Countywide Forum
- Third Sector Wider Partnership
- LAA Implementation Task Group

Principles underpinning the Partnership Agreement

This agreement is framed by the values and priorities outlined in the Northamptonshire Compact.



As such, the agreement Supports diversity and equality of opportunity, as expressed in the Equalities Statement that accompanies the Compact document:

DIVERSITY

We value diversity in our community and affirm the importance of equality of opportunity in all areas of our work. We recognise that all people are equally worthy of respect, regardless of gender, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, faith, mental or physical ability or impairment, or any other difference that may exist from the majority population.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

We oppose all forms of negative discrimination (intentional, unintentional and institutional). We believe that all individuals have the right to be treated fairly, with dignity and respect.

We are firmly committed to promoting equality of opportunity. We seek to ensure that our processes, including partnerships with other agencies and other sectors, are relevant and accessible to all involved; and that the services provided by the agencies of Northamptonshire are appropriate in design and delivery to those who wish to use them. From "Equalities Statement"

(Information: This partnership agreement has no **legally binding ties**, but sets out how the third sector will work collaboratively and in partnership and in the spirit of **Good Practice and Fairness**)

For more information on the Northamptonshire Compact and full details of the five codes please visit www.niconsortium.org.uk

6. The Agreement

As members of the Third Sector, we agree to work with our partners towards the following objectives in the spirit of the Compact. The agreement is a live document regularly updated to reflect changes in the sector.

■ Sustainable Third Sector services

In order to best serve the needs of communities, the Third Sector needs to be sustainable. Collective commitment to ensuring the sector's sustainability is essential and this can be achieved by collaborative working between all stakeholders, which is underpinned by the Voluntary Sector Compact.

■ Improving the sector's 'reach'

By providing:

- Support
- Building Capacity
- Improving Skills
- Sharing Resources
- Effective Communication
- Platform for Engagement
- Encouraging Collaboration
- Identifying Commonality

■ An effective Communications Strategy for all stakeholders

Much of what the Third Sector achieves goes unnoticed by others in the sector and those outside it. If we are to be an effective force for mainstream and specialist areas of the third sector, including social and health improvement, we need to communicate our achievements to others. To this end, we need to develop a Communications Strategy, agree and implement it.

■ A new Business Plan for onward Infrastructure Improvement and development

Annual business plans are needed that are built around the six areas of development, given by ChangeUp – performance management, workforce development, ICT development, volunteering and governance improvements.

■ Strong leadership and a voice for the Third Sector in Northamptonshire

Strong leadership of the Third Sector is essential. This provides strategic focus within the sector and a recognisable voice in dealings with other sectors in Northamptonshire.

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■ Strong leadership and a voice for the Sector, locally regionally and nationally

Leadership needs to extend beyond the county, as does the influence of the local Third Sector in regional and national debates.

■ Gather and disseminate meaningful information on the activity of the Sector in Northamptonshire

The gathering and sharing of activity data is crucial in the monitoring and evaluation of service delivery. It also plays a crucial role in the development of the Third Sector in terms of reconfiguring services to meet changing needs.

■ Work closely with the development and delivery of the Northamptonshire Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and Local Area Agreement (LAA)

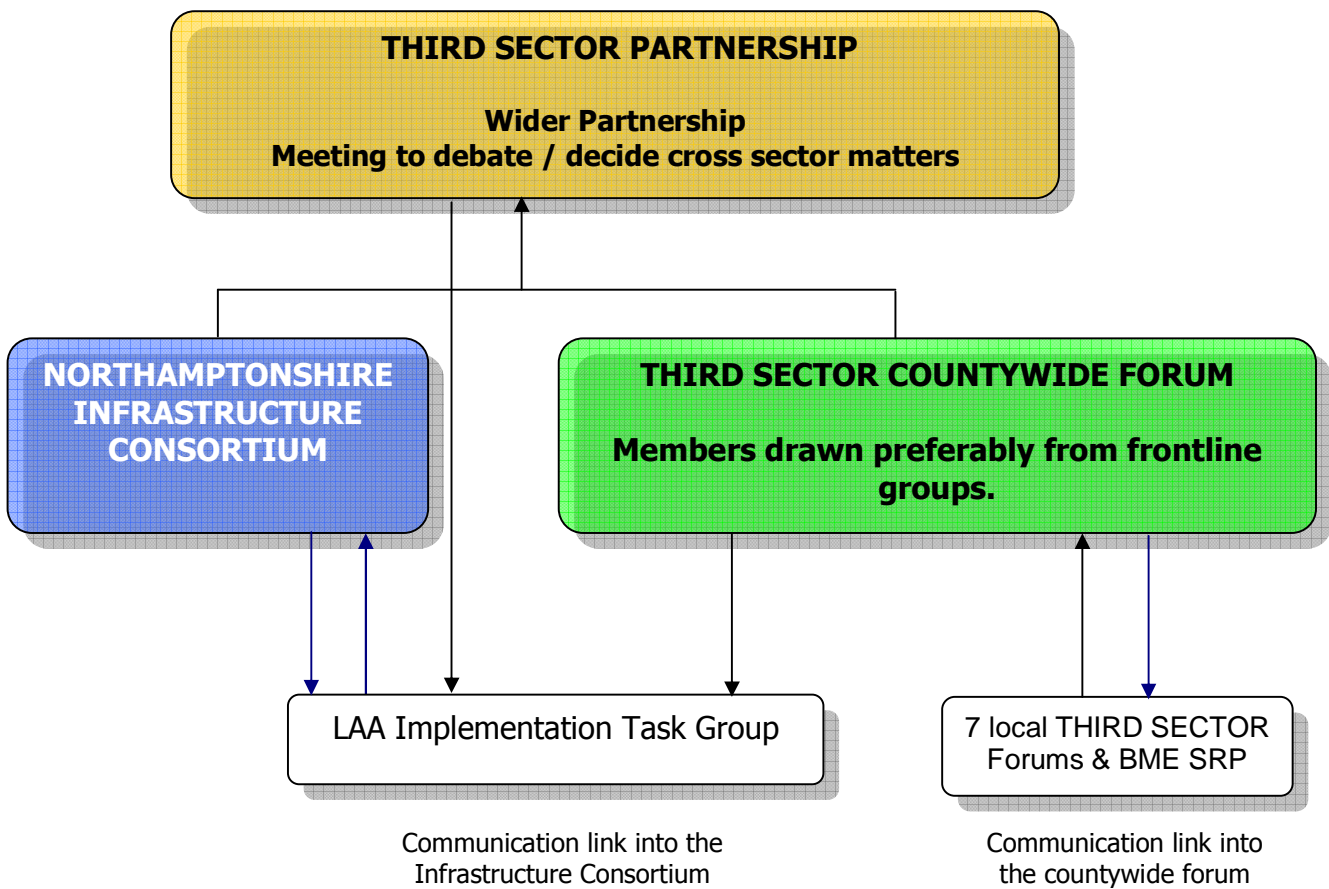
The SCS, and its LAA, provide part of the framework within which we as a sector function. The Third Sector contributes substantially to achieving the SCS's ambitions and meeting the LAA outcomes and targets, and is crucial to their success.

■ Work closely with the following partners, becoming an equal partner in Northamptonshire and the East Midlands

- The Third Sector (all community, voluntary and social enterprise organisations)
- Northamptonshire County Council
- All Borough and District Councils
- The Primary Care Trust
- Police
- The Fire Service
- Learning and Skills Council
- Government Office East Midlands
- East Midlands Development Agency

7. Structures

It is proposed that the concept of Third Sector replaces 'VCS', it's aim is to better accommodate the roles of social enterprises; not for profit companies; co-operatives and other specialist areas of the third sector. This shift in language is also aligned with shifts in funding and policy developments at a national level and within areas of government.



8. Northamptonshire Countywide Forum

This will build from the work of the **Third Sector Local Forums**

Membership

- Yet to be determined.

Role

- Clear structure of work plan and issues
- Lobbying and campaigning function links into strategic group
- Appointing VCS representatives on Countywide bodies (LAA Boards, CFAP, etc.)
- Operational focus.
- Discussion of issues that link policy and practice

Other aspects

- Yet to be determined.

9. Northamptonshire Infrastructure Consortium (NIC)

Membership

Membership is from Third sector organisations whose main function is providing infrastructure support. The criteria for automatic membership are:

- Having a current infrastructure contract from Northamptonshire County Council.
- Providing infrastructure support to local frontline organisations at Borough / District &/or County levels.

Agreement on eligibility will be by the current members of the NIC.

To ensure there is diversity and input from across the sector, up to 5 additional members can be selected by the NIC from organisation who apply to join. Such organisations can be co-opted for a 3 year period.

A representative of the Countywide Forum, usually the Chair or Vice Chair, will also have a place on this group.

Role

- To develop a clear infrastructure plan for the county utilising funding sources not available to front-line organisations.
- To deliver against the infrastructure plan for the county, monitoring progress.
- To provide support to the Third Sector District and Countywide Forums.
- Strategic development of Compact.
- To act as the sector Infrastructure voice, locally, regionally and nationally.
- To strategically coordinate and raise awareness of national, regional, county and local programmes, initiatives and funding streams to maximise the impact of an integrated approach by the sector.
- To link into the regional consortiums at a strategic level.
- To link/work with CFAP and the Thematic Partnerships as appropriate.

Officers

There will be a Chair and Vice Chair elected according to an approved procedure.

Business

- The group will usually meet every other month.
- There will be sub-groups, standing and task & finish. The membership of these groups may include others from the sector whose contribution will assist the work of the sub-group.
- The group will have effective and transparent appropriate policies and procedures recorded separately
- Administrative support for the Infrastructure Consortium will be by the Capacity Builders Consortium contract holder.

10. The Wider Partnership

Membership

Open to all members of the Third Sector in Northamptonshire and all relevant stakeholders (e.g. statutory bodies, community groups, business sector etc).

Role

- To communicate with frontline Third Sector on developments pertaining to the Sector
- To communicate, debate and discuss as a Countywide Sector on emerging issues and developments e.g. the Northamptonshire Local Area Agreement (LAA), Local Strategic Partnerships etc.
- A structure designed to inform the Third Sector of strategic and operational issues, emerging policies and agendas within the Sector.
- To share practice and developments across the county.
- To elect officers and representatives, as specified, to Countywide Forum.

Officers

There will be a Chair and Vice Chair elected for a two year period. Both will be from Third Sector Organisations.

Business

- Meetings will be Conferences or Event /Issue led, with the aim of 1 or 2 meetings per year.
- Any decisions required will be made by Third Sector organisations. They will be made by simple majority by one vote per sector organisation present at the meeting, unless a different method is agreed at that time.

11. LAA Implementation Task Group (LITG)

Membership

Membership will be drawn from the Countywide Forum, Local Fora, the NIC and all representatives appointed the Northamptonshire Partnership. Membership will be limited to keep the group at an effective level.

Role

- To take the lead for the sector in the work of the Northamptonshire Partnership (NP) to achieve the Four Ambitions including reviews of their strategies and the LAA.
- To lead the sectors work on outcomes and targets where the sector is lead partner, e.g. a "thriving" sector, increase volunteering.
- To receive reports from the sector advocates on the NP Boards and provide direction to them. The group will also ensure training and support for the advocates.
- To ensure the activities of the NP are communicated to the sector as a whole.

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Officers

There will be a Chair and Vice Chair elected for a two year period from amongst the members of the group.

Business

- The Group will usually meet quarterly.
- The LAA target delivery for volunteering will be achieved through a sub-group consisting mainly of the volunteering coordinators from Infrastructure Organisations.
- Administrative support for the LITG will be by the Capacity Builders Consortium contract holder.

12. Representation by the Third Sector

An approved procedure will be used to appoint representatives to the various positions on Boards, etc. at a County level. These include:

- Northamptonshire Partnership Boards LAA
- Community Funding Advisory Panel(s) CFAP

13. Review of the Partnership Agreement

The Partnership Agreement will continually be considered for ways in which it can better reflect activity with and within the Third Sector in Northamptonshire. However, it will require a full review every three years reflecting the changes on the cross sector agreements in the County.

14. Amendments to the Partnership Agreement

This Agreement can only be changed by a majority at any meeting of the Third Sector Wider Partnership at which the change is included on that meeting's agenda.

15. Amendment Record

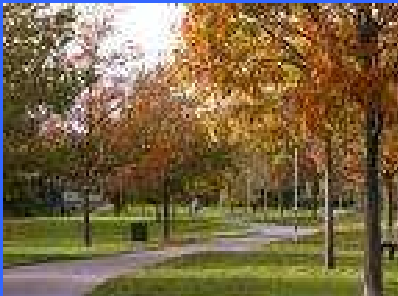
| Date | Issue | Change Description |
|----------|-----------------|---|
| 22.02.07 | 0 | Consultation Document |
| 23.05.07 | Final Draft 01 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reformatting 2. Inclusion of BME SRP 3. Inclusion of LAA Task Group 4. Third Sector logo 5. Countywide forum membership changed from 13 to 14 6. Page 8, LAA Task Group & BME SRP added 7. Rationalise removed, Improving the sectors reach, included. |
| 11.06.07 | Final Draft 02 | Grammar, Font, Terminology changes |
| 18.06.07 | Release Issue 1 | Final amendments, post the Partnership Agreement Launch event, 14 th June 2007, the Saints Rugby Ground. Comment regarding legality of this agreement (page 5) and list of partners and potential partners (page 7). |
| 30.08.07 | Limited Issue 2 | Consultation changes included – approved by Consortium SG. To be sent back to consultees |
| 25.02.09 | 2 | Updating for changes to sector since the last issue. Approved at conference – no comments by 31.03.09 |

16. Glossary of Terms

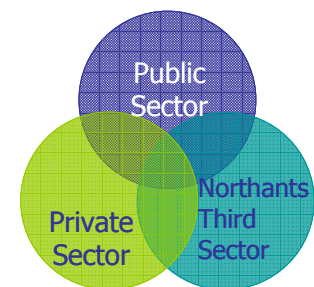
| | |
|------|--|
| BME | Black & Minority Ethnic |
| CDRP | Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership |
| CFAP | Community Funding Advisory Panel |
| IIP | Infrastructure Investment Plan |
| LAA | Local Area Agreement |
| LITG | LAA Implementation Task Group |
| LSP | Local Strategic Partnership |
| NCC | Northamptonshire County Council |
| NIC | Northamptonshire Infrastructure Consortium |
| NP | Northamptonshire Partnership |
| VCS | Voluntary & Community Sector |
| SCS | Sustainable Community Strategy |
| SRP | Sub-Regional Partnership |

Northamptonshire's Third Sector Partnership Agreement

Issue: 2



**Consortium Secretariat
NVC
15 St Giles Street
Northampton
NN1 1JA
01604 637522
info@niconsortium.org.uk**



**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
Compact**