

The North Ayrshire Compact

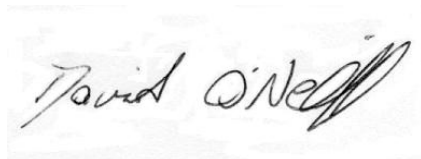
Foreword

The North Ayrshire Compact is a new written agreement between the public sector and the community and voluntary sector. It builds on a long history of close working and interdependence between us. The Compact gives us all the opportunity to formalise these long-standing working arrangements in the context of the ongoing development of the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP).


Our thanks go to those who helped develop the Compact agreement, in particular the members of the Compact Joint Working Group. This included representatives from all statutory public sector partners in the community planning process, and representatives from the community and voluntary sector.

The Compact is not just a document. It represents an active and ongoing commitment to working together. The Compact sets a recognised standard for partnership working between the public and community/ voluntary sectors, which we will constantly aim to achieve. The Compact should be used as a working tool – to encourage joint working, to recognise good practice, and to challenge each other when we are not getting it right.

We look forward to continuing to work together to deliver the North Ayrshire Compact.



David O'Neill
Chair
North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership



Stephen McLaughlan
Chair
Compact Joint Working Group

1. Introduction

This is an agreement between public sector partners within the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and North Ayrshire community and voluntary sector organisations that sets out shared principles, values and commitments. It is designed to state clearly what each party can expect from the other.

The Compact is a shared commitment to build mutual trust and confidence and an appreciation of the roles and contributions of public and community and voluntary sector bodies towards the enhancement of North Ayrshire. To this end the Compact will be an integral part of the Community Planning process.

The Compact has been put together by representatives of public and community and voluntary bodies in North Ayrshire to provide a platform for improved co-operation, understanding, and respect. It will build upon the many good examples in North Ayrshire of close working between public agencies and community and voluntary sector bodies.

The Compact will be promoted and monitored by a Compact Officers Group comprising representatives from the CPP partners and the community and voluntary sector through an action plan that will be allowed to develop as the Compact progresses.

By the community and voluntary sector we mean Independent community or voluntary groups that are not for profit organisations formed by people who have come together of their own free will to respond to issues regarding the quality of life for fellow citizens, including community councils.

Public Bodies are, in terms of this Compact Agreement, the six public sector partners within the Community Planning Partnership, namely North Ayrshire Council, Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Communities Scotland, Strathclyde Police and Strathclyde Fire and Rescue.

2. Vision

The vision for the Compact is:

To achieve a culture of mutual understanding, trust and confidence that enables the public, community and voluntary sector partners across North Ayrshire to find effective ways of working co-operatively towards the achievement of outcomes that will improve the quality of life of local people and communities.

From this the following underlying shared principles provide the foundation of the Compact.

3. Shared Principles

Partnership:

- We believe that by working together and with others we will achieve more for the people and communities of North Ayrshire.
- We believe that in working closely together the community and voluntary sector and public sectors can achieve their own aims and contribute towards achieving common aims and objectives
- We believe that voluntary action and community involvement are vital components of a democratic society and promote social inclusion.
- We believe that an independent and diverse community and voluntary sector is fundamental to the well being of the people and communities of North Ayrshire and that it does make a unique contribution
- We agree that genuine partnerships require integrity, objectivity, understanding, accountability, openness, honesty and close working with recognition of the equal value of everyone's contribution.

Consultation

- We agree that clear, open and accessible consultation improves policy development, builds relationships and enhances the design and delivery of services and programmes, and time and resources will be allocated to this.

Equal Opportunities

- We are committed to promoting and striving for equality of opportunity for everyone
- Our policies will promote best practice and equal rights in employment, involvement of volunteers, activities and service provision.
- We will involve service users and other stakeholders in the development and management of services.
- We will avoid using jargon and encourage the public sector to use plain English.

Accountability and Transparency

- We will maintain high standards of governance, conduct, accountability and openness.
- We will be consistent in the way that we manage funding arrangements, monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance, as far as possible within our respective legal and financial constraints.

Resources

- We recognise that Compact partners do have responsibilities that may require a prioritisation of resource allocation.
- We are committed to recognising the importance of stability, continuity and consistency in the planning and provision of services.

- We believe that minimising the adverse environmental impact of service provision is important.

Funding

- We will be fair and consistent in the way we manage funding arrangements, monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance, as far as possible within our respective legal and financial constraints.
- We will provide non-financial support, which may include advice and opportunities for training to community and voluntary organisations.
- We will recognise the need to include full cost recovery in bids for service contracts.

Joint Undertakings

- We will be open, honest and truthful in all our dealings with each other.
- We will foster the partnership between the public, community and voluntary sectors so that we engage genuinely, meaningfully and democratically with all people in society.
- We will keep each other informed of those matters that are important to meeting our common aims and objectives.
- We will work together to meet the present and future needs of those who live and work in North Ayrshire.
- We will agree ways to measure and review the impact of our work towards our common objectives and then share this information, including the lessons learned, as widely as possible.
- We will recognise the important role and contribution of all voluntary and community groups and will ensure that there are opportunities for them to be included in the Compact.
- We will work with the National Codes of Practice and implement national best practice locally.
- We will use the Community Engagement Standards as guidance for developing and sustaining working relationships between the public, community and voluntary sectors.
- We will make sure that our staff and volunteers are equipped to do their tasks, working with other agencies where appropriate to achieve this. This includes recruiting the right people, providing them with training, and developing and managing them appropriately.
- We will work together to promote and develop a strong and healthy Community and Voluntary sector in North Ayrshire.

4. Public and Community and Voluntary Sector Commitments

Public Sector Commitments:

Consultation

- We will consult with the community and voluntary sector to ensure the community and voluntary sector is given the opportunity to participate in the development of policy and strategic planning in relation to their areas of interest and responsibility.
- We will consult with the community and voluntary sector to make sure that the community and voluntary sector is appropriately represented within the Community Planning Partnership structures.
- We will manage consultation in such a way that it minimises any inconvenience to the community and voluntary sector groups.
- We will allow, by agreeing in advance, a clear timetable for all consultation, so that service users and other people who also benefit from services can be included. We will ensure that the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups are positively taken into account, including consultation with organisations representing those groups. We will present the results quickly and simply to everyone involved in the process.
- We aim for openness and transparency in our dealings with community and voluntary organisations, recognising the need for clear language and avoidance of jargon.

Independence and Campaigning

- We recognise that community and voluntary organisations are independent and have the right to manage their own affairs.
- We recognise and respect the independence of the community and voluntary sector and their legitimate campaigning and challenging role irrespective of any funding relationship that might exist.
- We aim to monitor and feedback on policy developments for implications for the community and voluntary sector.
- We will respond flexibly and sensitively towards each other and respect confidentiality.
- We will comply with recognised codes of practice when involving volunteers within our services.
- We will work closely with the community and voluntary sector to enhance the delivery of our statutory obligations and other services where appropriate.
- We will meet our legal, reporting and accounting obligations as funders, planners and service providers.

Community and Voluntary Sector Commitments:

Consultation

- We will represent the views of local people and our national bodies where appropriate, at planning, management, monitoring and evaluating groups.
- We will gather the views of local people about services and any issues that they have in meeting their needs, and pass these views on to service providers.
- We will support consultation by the public sector and we will make sure that consultation reaches all the people that need to be included.
- We will make sure that the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged people and groups are positively taken into account and provided for.

Independence and Campaigning

- The community and voluntary sector comprises numerous individual organisations each with their own aims and objectives that they will wish to promote, however these organisations agree to work for the common good of the sector.
- We will respond flexibly and sensitively towards each other and respect confidentiality.