

Third Sector Partnership Agreement 2023 to 2028

Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector in Gwent

FOREWORD

First established in 1999 as a Voluntary Sector Compact, this Partnership Agreement between statutory organisations and the voluntary and community sector in the Gwent Region recognises the mutual benefits that can be gained from close co-operation and sets out guidelines for how all parties should work together. Considerable progress has been made in harnessing the work of the voluntary sector together with other major players in the region to work together for the benefit of residents.

The Gwent Public Services Board (PSB) was created in 2021 with a vision of working towards the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014. The Act provides a platform for focussed actions bringing all partners together with the voluntary and community sector to improve the well-being of people across the Gwent Region. The Gwent PSB and its Wellbeing Aims will be key drivers feeding into Locality support structures who will be responsible for delivering the priorities of not only the Gwent Well-being Plan but its needs and priorities linked directly to the support of their local communities.

PARTNERS – content to be confirmed

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council – The Local Authority provide statutory services in Blaenau Gwent, with the area situated in the valleys of South East Wales and is defined physically by high hillsides dividing three main valleys. These valleys are home to towns and villages which give the county borough a busy, urban feel, but Blaenau Gwent is actually largely rural. With the industrial revolution and the establishment of ironworks, coal mining and steel making, the population of Blaenau Gwent grew from around 1,200 to well over 120,000 by the early 20th century. The people of Blaenau Gwent had a strong work and community ethic, demonstrated by them campaigning for improvements to their quality of life, such as establishing the first ever Board of Health and campaigning for electoral reform. Blaenau Gwent has a rich cultural heritage which is reflected in monuments, buildings, landscapes and people.

In past decades the people of Blaenau Gwent have faced many challenges, the closure of all the coal mines in the late 1980s, and the Ebbw Vale Steelworks in 2002 leading to many job losses. In an attempt to reduce the effect of this, significant effort has been put into changing the focus of the local economy towards the manufacturing and services industries. However, despite this, there has been an overall loss of jobs and many of our young people and families have had to move away in search of further education and employment. This is highlighted by a 5% reduction in the population between 1991 and 2011. Many working residents commute outside the borough to work and commuting distances have increased more than any local authority in Wales. The area has high levels of unemployment and a high percentage of people who are dependent on benefits.

In more recent times, the area has seen significant structural and environment improvement, following major levels of capital investment, and the greening of our valleys as nature recovers from the long-term scarring caused through our historical industries.

Caerphilly County Borough Council - The Local Authority within Caerphilly provide statutory services in an area stretching from the Brecon Beacons National Park in the north, to Cardiff and Newport in the south, the county borough is a little over 30km long and 17.5km wide. It is formed by the valleys of three rivers, the Rhymney, Sirhowy and Ebbw and is a mixture of urban and rural communities. Three quarters of the county borough is used for agriculture and forestry. There are five principal centres within Caerphilly county borough' Caerphilly, Blackwood, Risca, Bargoed and Ystrad Mynach, plus four local centres of Newbridge, Rhymney, Nelson and Bedwas. These are the major centres for employment and, retail, provision of services and centres of population. People are widely dispersed amongst fifty small towns and villages with the main settlements largely reflecting the area's rich coal mining heritage. Caerphilly has an expanding

economy and benefits through good transport links to Cardiff but there are significant levels of unemployment and poor health.

Monmouthshire County Borough Council – Occupying a strategic position between the major centres in South Wales and the South West of England and the Midlands, the main settlements are Abergavenny, Chepstow, Monmouth, Caldicot, Usk and Magor/Undy, with approximately half of the total population living in wards defined as being in urban areas. Monmouthshire’s distinctive settlement pattern arises from its historic market towns and villages and their relationship with the surrounding rural areas. A good road network connects Monmouthshire to major population centres such as Cardiff, Newport and Bristol and many of the population take advantage of these links to commute out of the area for employment opportunities. The local authority provide statutory services in a county which is predominantly rural and has a rich and diverse landscape stretching from the coastline of the Gwent Levels in the south, and the uplands of the Brecon Beacons National Park in the north, to the picturesque river corridor of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Beauty in the east. The county contains some good quality agricultural land and has a high proportion of farming land. Monmouthshire is generally a prosperous area offering a high quality of life for its residents. However, Monmouthshire does have hidden pockets of deprivation starker when they are compared with areas of relative wealth.

Newport County Borough Council - Newport City is the third largest urban centre in Wales and is a multi-cultural city with its own unique atmosphere, where traditional industries sit alongside new electronics and financial service sectors. The Local Authority provides its statutory services in a vibrant, forward-thinking city steeped in a rich industrial heritage, dating from the 19th century when its important strategic location was first recognised. The first settlers in the Newport area arrived during the Bronze Age and evidence of this has survived to present day, particularly on the coastal levels. During the Roman occupation, Caerleon became a principal military base and substantial excavated remains can be seen, including the amphitheatre, baths and barracks occupied by the Roman Legion. During the Industrial Revolution of the late 18th and 19th centuries, the city grew substantially, firstly with the development of the canal network and then with the railways, enabling vast quantities of coal to be exported, along with iron and steel products. In more modern times, steelmaking was a mainstay of the economy through the 20th century, along with its port. However, much of the heavy industry went into decline towards the end of the century as steelmaking at Llanwern Steelworks, for example, ceased in 2001, resulting in the loss of 1,300 jobs.

Torfaen County Borough Council - The Local Authority provide statutory services within Torfaen and is the most easterly of the South Wales urbanised valleys. Geographically the area runs from the Heads of the Valleys in the north to the M4 corridor in the south with three main settlements, Blaenavon, Pontypool and Cwmbran. Pontypool and Blaenavon were originally established to exploit the abundant non-renewable charcoal, coal and iron resources in the area. As those heavy industries declined over the past 100 years, so did the prosperity of those areas. The World Heritage Site town of Blaenavon has a population of around 6,500 is furthest north in the borough and is famous for the Big Pit Coal Mining Museum and Europe’s best preserved 18th century ironworks. The former industrial town of Pontypool with its traditional indoor and outdoor market is the next largest settlement located in the heart of the borough, and with the various communities that surround it, has a population of around 37,700. In the south of the borough, Cwmbran is unique in being the only New Town in Wales, being designated in 1949 and designed as a distinctive, progressive and modern town offering new opportunities for its residents. Much of the southern parts of the county borough are now urbanised around Cwmbran, which has the largest population of each of the three settlement areas with around 49,800. Cwmbran Shopping Centre attracts large numbers of shopping visitors from the wider area of Gwent and the M4 corridor.

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board – The Aneurin Bevan University Health Board was established on the 1st October 2009 and covers the Local Authority areas of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport, Torfaen and South Powys. In Gwent, the ABUHB is responsible for the planning, implementation and co-ordination of local health services. It is responsible for the delivery of health care

services through hospitals, health centres, local clinics and primary care facilities which include GP Practices, pharmacies, dental practices and optometrists along with facilities providing mental health and learning disability services. The ABUHB has an important role to play in multi-agency, integrated assessment of the needs of the local population to identify how to develop services to improve health, social care and well-being to reduce inequities across the borough. The ABUHB is a statutory member of the Gwent PSB.

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service – The Service is one of three Fire and Rescue Services in Wales, covering the area of ten local authorities and is committed to making communities a safer place to live, work and visit. The Community Safety and Partnership Department of the Service is actively involved in developing strategies to reduce deliberate/arson fires, accidental fires and road traffic accidents throughout the Service area. The Partnership working groups highlight and influence not only the physical and social effects of fire and road accidents, but also the cost to the communities. These groups work together and towards providing a safer community. SWF&RS is a statutory member of the Gwent PSB.

Natural Resources Wales - Natural Resources Wales (NRW) was formed in April 2013, largely taking over the functions of the Countryside Council for Wales, Forestry Commission Wales and the Environment Agency in Wales, as well as certain Welsh Government functions. Its purpose is to champion the sustainable management of natural resources. This means looking after air, land, water, wildlife, plants and soil to improve Wales' well-being, and provide a better future for everyone. NRW is a statutory member of the Gwent PSB.

The Chief Constable for Gwent – The Gwent representation covers an area of 600 square miles bounded by Abergavenny in the North, Newport in the South, Chepstow in the East and Caerphilly in the West. The Gwent policing area is mixed, rural and urban. Gwent Police actively encourages and develops working partnerships with the voluntary sector, local authorities and businesses with a shared goal of creating safer communities. For Gwent Police these partnerships mean additional resources to fund the equipment and services needed to help reduce crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour. Gwent Police is an invited member of the Gwent Public Services Board.

The Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner - The Police and Crime Commissioner is the person responsible for representing the people of Gwent and ensuring that the service provided by the police is efficient and effective. The Commissioner holds the Chief Constable to account for the delivery of local policing, publishes a Police and Crime Plan, sets the force budget and precept, regularly engages with the public and communities and appoints the chief constable. The Commissioner also works with partners to prevent and tackle crime and re-offending. The Commissioner is supported by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. The PCC is an invited member of the Gwent PSB.

National Probation Service for Wales - The National Probation Service (NPS) Gwent currently supervises offenders in the community and custody. The NPS manages those offenders who are assessed to be high risk of serious harm at the commencement of their sentence. NPS staff undertake risk assessments and risk management planning and ensuring that these offenders receive the interventions required either on a one to one basis or in group settings, in order to 'Prevent Victims by Changing Lives'. The NPS is an invited member of the Gwent PSB.

Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO) – GAVO is the county voluntary council covering Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire and Newport. GAVO is an umbrella organisation providing support, advice and information to the voluntary and community sector with over 1000 links into the Communities through membership, relationships and working practices. GAVO is an invited member representing the voice of the voluntary sector in the above counties at the Gwent PSB, the related Lead Delivery Partnerships, Regional Partnership Board and other structures at a strategic level across the county borough. GAVO supports joint working through the Gwent Well-being Plan, Local Delivery Aims, supporting Gwent and Local Public Service structures, forums and networks.

Torfaen Voluntary Alliance (TVA) – TVA is the county voluntary council supporting the Third Sector in Torfaen by assisting organisations to secure funding, providing advice on charity law registration and constitutions, training for Third Sector groups and promoting volunteering. TVA is the umbrella organisation for the Third Sector in Torfaen. We provide and promote an accessible and accurate range of support services to enhance the development and effectiveness of the Third Sector. TVA is an invited member representing the voice of the voluntary sector in Torfaen at the Gwent PSB, the related Lead Delivery Partnership for Torfaen, Regional Partnership Board and other structures at a strategic level across the county borough. TVA supports joint working through the Gwent Well-being Plan, Torfaen Delivery Aims, supporting Gwent and Local Public Service structures, forums and networks.

The Welsh Ministers - Wales has its own government, making policies and laws for our country. We are working to help improve the lives of people in Wales and make our nation a better place in which to live and work. Welsh ministers will be represented through the attendance of Civil Servants and will have the key remit of informing Officials and Ministers in order for them to be able to make decisions on matters regarding the Gwent region linking into Wales as a whole, develop policies and implement them and contribute towards Welsh law (Senedd bills).

Public Health Wales - Public Health Wales is one of the 11 organisations which makes up NHS Wales and is the national public health agency in Wales. It works to protect and improve health and well-being and reduce health inequalities for the people of Wales. Public Health Wales, health boards and local authorities work closely together to promote public health in their areas. PHW jointly identify and set the local strategic agenda for public health improvement in partnership with communities, housing, education, police, fire and rescue and the voluntary sector.

A representative of the Registered Social Landlords in the region – The registered social landlord (RSL) representative is a not for profit, private sector organisation that provides affordable housing to people of the Wales. These organisations may be housing corporations, trusts, companies, or cooperatives. Each registered social landlord is registered with a non-departmental public body that sponsors and regulates the RSL. A non-departmental public body is a public organization that runs with relative autonomy, but is ultimately accountable to the government for its actions and policies.

A representative from the tertiary academic sector - Tertiary education is the educational level following the completion of secondary education. Vocational education beyond secondary education is known as further education in Wales. Tertiary education becomes even more relevant for workers to compete in the labour market.

A representative (Chair or Vice-Chair) from the Gwent Strategic Well-being Action Group (GSWAG) – The Gwent Strategic Well-being Action Group acts as the officer support group to the Gwent Public Service Board. Its aims are varied and wide and range from preparing the local assessment of well-being and Gwent Wellbeing Plan, ensuring regional activity contributes to the Board's wellbeing objectives and is delivered in collaboration with partners, ensures partnerships are open and transparent and is the group that facilitates relationship between all and the continuity and reporting between regional activity and the work of the Local Delivery Groups.

PARTNERS COMMITMENT

All Partners to the Partnership Agreement agree to adhere to the values, principles and broad commitments of the Agreement and to actively work together for the benefits of local people and communities.

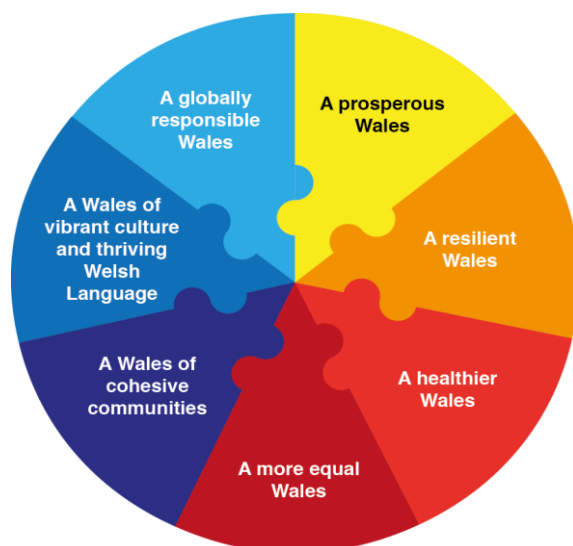
INTRODUCTION

The Partnership Agreement provides the framework for the voluntary and community sector in Gwent and other partners to work together. The Gwent PSB Well-being Plan 2023-2028 will be a key focus of partnership activity over the next five years. The first Well-being Plan was published in 2018 and since then there has been continuous engagement and consultation to develop robust Assessments of Wellbeing for the counties within Gwent and it continues to be the long term strategy to make the Gwent region a better place to live, work and visit. The Well-being requirements are overseen by Gwent PSB and the Local Delivery Partnerships.

FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGING THE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

The Gwent Public Services Board has developed a Performance Accountability Framework, which will manage the delivery of the Well-being Plan and whilst the Partnership Agreement provides a platform for wider partnership working it will need to encompass the principles set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The Act sets out seven National Well-being Goals for Wales, which public services must work towards to improve social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being. These are summarised below:



The Act also sets out how public services should use the Sustainable Development Principle, which stipulates that “We must act in a manner in which we ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

The Act sets out five ways of working to evidence how we will work to deliver the Well-being Plan. These are:



Long Term - The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.



Integration - Considering how the public body’s well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.



Prevention - How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.



Collaboration - Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.



Involvement - The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS FOR THE PARTNERSHIP THIRD SECTOR INTEGRATION

With the inception of the Gwent PSB and through the Terms of Reference, commitment to the Local Delivery Groups within each area, the Third Sector needs to develop its own reporting mechanisms, communication channels and involvement opportunities in the Well Being agenda across the Gwent footprint.

Each area will agree its local objectives in collaboration with partners. and the local delivery partnership. The Local Delivery Plans for each Gwent region will be key to supporting this document and will be agreed through Local Delivery Partnerships, GSWAG and Gwent PSB and will be formed over the course of the Well-being plan development stages.

The structures that support Third Sector representation will be / are shown in each of the appendices below:

- Blaenau Gwent – Appendix 1
- Caerphilly – Appendix 2
- Monmouthshire – Appendix 3
- Newport – Appendix 4
- Torfaen – Appendix 5

The responsibilities of each CVC Third Sector representative and Public Service partner is to support the Gwent PSB and its requirement to deliver the Well-being objectives that are outlined in each of these Appendices as they differ from region to region.

The overarching Governance and acceptance of the involvement of the Third Sector in the Gwent PSB will be agreed within this overarching document with each of the Appendices and their structures being developed in collaboration with area representatives and the wider Third Sector and will be agreed through the area specific partnerships.

SHARED VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

All partners to this Partnership Agreement seek to adhere to the following values and principles:

- **good quality communication** - there is an obligation on Partners to engage in constructive dialogue at all stages of partnership work.
- **equality of opportunity** - employment and service delivery issues should be handled in a non-discriminatory manner and equality of opportunity should be built into initiatives to ensure that all services are equally accessible to everyone.
- **social inclusion** - activities undertaken in partnership should be developed in ways that enable involvement of as many sections of society as possible, by actively addressing factors that can lead to exclusion (for example child care, poor transport, low incomes, lack of information, debt).
- **sustainability** - joint action to improve the quality of life should not be at the expense of the environment and/or jeopardise the natural resources available for future generations.
- **openness and accountability** - joint work / financial transactions should be conducted in an open and honest manner with clear documentation.

- **information/intelligence sharing** - to ensure that initiatives are developed in light of all available facts (subject to confidentiality constraints).
- **proposals for partnership work** – should be reported to the relevant Governance structures outlined in Appendix 1 - 6, at an early stage to ensure that the above factors have been taken into consideration. Initiatives must then be periodically reported to the Committee updating progress with the initiative.

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT COMMITMENTS

All parties will work to promote the Partnership Agreement across their organisations and make the following broad commitments:

Gwent PSB partner bodies commit to:

- Working with third sector organisations to expand the range of services and activities available to the local community.
- Respecting the independence of the sector, including its rights within the law to campaign and to challenge policies.
- Ensuring that the third sector has an equal say in the development of all relevant policies and programmes.
- Recognising the important role of GAVO and TVA as the Local County Voluntary Council's (CVC's) as a source of support, advice, information, guidance, representation, volunteering and training for the voluntary sector.
- In the delivery of public services through the third sector, the use of procurement rather than grants and agreeing outcomes which capture the added value of services, which may result from delivery by the Third Sector.
- Minimising bureaucracy, in line with corporate governance requirements, associated with application, qualification, monitoring and reporting, and audit processes and introduction of joined-up monitoring and audit arrangements.
- Working with the breadth of the third sector, including small community organisations, social enterprises, to ensure all 9 protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 are taken into account as appropriate in joint work undertaken (Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation).
- Following best practice in the management of volunteers.
- Ensuring staff have an understanding of how the third sector works to enhance the provision of public services.

Third sector organisations commit to:

- Operating through open and accountable organisations.
- Ensuring policy positions and consultation responses fully reflect the views of stakeholders and constituents.
- Setting clear outcomes to be delivered when competing for contracts.
- Having robust monitoring, evaluation and financial management systems which provide accurate and timely information to funders and account for public funds.
- Recognising the legal and financial constraints within public sector bodies operate and the role of elected members in setting policies.
- Implementing good practice in the management and recruitment of volunteers, providing access to training and support.
- Supporting the need for high quality public services in the community.
- Contributing to delivering on the Well-being Plan, both for Gwent and the relevant Locality.

In relation to consultation and engagement:

- Having clear, jointly agreed mechanisms for consultation and engagement, in particular ensuring involvement of disadvantaged, socially excluded, and marginalised groups, and, as appropriate, across the spectrum of the 9 protected equality characteristics (Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment,

Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation).

- Ensuring third sector organisations which have expressed an interest in their areas of service delivery are identified by staff, included in consultations, and encouraged to participate in reviews of service provision, especially in relation to relevant Corporate Plans, which states the priorities and details how they will be achieved.
- Involving Third Sector representatives in the development of key policies, at the earliest possible opportunity.
- Consultations (where possible) should be of a minimum 12-week duration to ensure meaningful discussion can take place with networks, in order to make for a more informed response to the consultation.
- Providing feedback on the response to and outcome of consultation exercises.

In relation to volunteering:

- Support volunteering initiatives across the region, recognising volunteering is an important way of expressing active citizenship, and is beneficial for both the individual and the wider community, and can be a useful way back into paid work.
- Ensure that volunteers know clearly what is expected of them, with clearly specified lines of support and supervision, provision of training, safe working conditions and the payment of timely expenses.

In relation to service provision:

- For service specifications to have a clear structure, aims and objectives, a written statement that describes how decisions are made, with accountability and governance arrangements built in and an equalities and sustainability policy.
- Provide high quality, cost-effective services.
- Advise the Partners of unmet community needs via the relevant structures outlined in Appendix 1 - 6.

In relation to community development:

- Work with GAVO and TVA, and through the third sector, in all community development work undertaken in the relevant county borough with all partners.
- Work together with GAVO and TVA and the third sector on partnership bids for external funding, with the aim of moving towards pooling resources for community development initiatives.
- Assist partners by finding innovative ways of involving socially excluded and marginalised groups in community and voluntary sector activity.
- Assist local communities to put forward views so that they shape community development work.

In relation to other aspects of joint working:

- Ensure that all Partnership Agreement signatories and staff from their organisations abide by the above commitments as a matter of policy and treat each other with respect.
- Oppose discrimination in any form and assist Agreement Partners by finding innovative ways of involving socially excluded and marginalised groups in society in community and voluntary sector activity.
- To operate within the individual respective Agreement Partners Strategic Equality Plans and Welsh Language Schemes.

In relation to funding issues:

- Abide by the principles set out in the Funding Code of Practice below.
- Using contracts rather than grants when third sector organisations are delivering public services, and ensure that tender procedures are as accessible as possible for third sector organisations. Risks to the Council however, should always be given due consideration, particularly where a tender/contract undertaking is involved.

- Ensuring that all grants awarded outside of small grant schemes are confirmed via Service Level Agreements, which clearly set out specific outputs and outcomes to be delivered for the benefit of the community, and take into account equalities policies.
- Fund posts at similar pay levels and appropriate conditions of service, to their own employees where parity (either generally for the voluntary sector or specifically to an individual post) is properly evidenced.
- For third sector organisations to abide by agreed terms and conditions of funding, and recognise the financial constraints that public sector bodies operate within.

FUNDING CODE OF PRACTICE

The statutory sectors in the region recognise the Third Sector deliver high quality services, which complement or are additional to public services. Often services are delivered in a less bureaucratic but more responsive and cost effective way. Services/projects are often delivered too hard to reach groups promoting equality and social cohesion thus improving the quality of life across the relevant County Borough.

This Code, which follows the Welsh Government Code and guidance, seeks to improve the funding and contracting relationship to the mutual advantage of the statutory sector partners, and the Third sector by setting a framework for financial relationships.

Many third sector organisations enter into financial relationships with the statutory sector to deliver services or projects, either through grant funding or by supplying services purchased through a procurement / contracting process.

GAVO and TVA are signing the document on behalf of their areas of Third Sector representation within the Gwent Region.

Who is the Code for?

Even though the Code is a formal agreement between Partners who have signed up to the Code, it is also intended to be used as a working document by other organisations providing funding to voluntary and community organisations. The Code sets a standard to which Partners and the Third sector agree to work to in relation to funding, contracts and grant aid. It does not cover what is funded or who should be funded.

The code also acknowledges that all organisations, whether statutory or third sector, may have to adhere to the funding criteria of external agencies and where possible will integrate the good practice contained in this Code.

Funders are desired to make payments in advance where need arises and where possible. This is helpful for small third sector organisations with limited funds.

Relationship with other Agreements / Documents

The Local Region Partnership Agreement is the overarching agreement between Partners. The Funding Code of Practice is an integral element of the agreement.

Definitions of Agreements

Almost invariably payments from the statutory sector to the Third Sector will be made under an “agreement” of some kind. Terminology can differ between and within organisations but essentially the whole process is to ensure the funding is spent appropriately and within the agreed specification.

For the purpose of this Code the distinction between the two most commonly used agreements are described below: -

Contracts

A contract is a legally binding agreement and is generally used in situations where services are delivered externally or through another organisation or agency.

Service Level Agreements

Service Level Agreements have been around for a long time. However, over the past few years there has been progress in moving towards contracts as this is seen as best practice and provides formality and security for all.

Key Commitments in the Code:

In order to achieve the financial relationship, the following principles of shared values and mutual respect underpin the framework and ensure collaboratively we achieve our aim -

- Consistency and co-ordination - We are committed to seeking to join up /and or standardise funding arrangements as far as possible to minimise the burden on the Third Sector and ensure a focus on delivery.
- Simplicity and proportionality - We will ensure processes are as simple as possible and in proportion to the amount of money involved and the perceived risk.
- Timeliness - We will endeavour to allow adequate time for planning, decision-making and project/service implementation.
- Transparency and accountability - Our relationship will be open and honest allowing informed decisions about spending priorities within the relevant County Borough, ensuring all sectors are involved and learn from previous work and best practice.
- Focus on outcomes - We will ensure the achievement of outcomes and the demonstration of impact on our local communities are used as key indicators of the success of projects or services as a direct result of funding.
- Best Value/Governance - We will have a mutually agreed framework. For example, Outcomes Based Accountability methodology for monitoring and evaluation of performance, achievement of outcomes and impact, ensuring good use of public funding.
- Discussion and dialogue - We will continue to strive to improve communication between organisations through the work of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Sub-Committee thus helping to build trust to identify and overcome problems before they impact on the delivery of services / projects.
- Empathy - We will endeavour to understand each other's needs and requirements which should help avoid problems and help achieve outcomes.

How the Code is structured:

The Code sets out stages in the funding and contracting process including design and delivery under the following headings: -

- Project and Service Design

- Application and Tender Process
- Terms of Delivery
- Monitoring and Reporting
- Payment Terms
- Concluding a Financial Relationship

PROJECT AND SERVICE DESIGN

Agreement Partners increasingly call for effective third sector participation as it is recognised that the sector can often reach vulnerable groups that the statutory bodies cannot. The third sector is expected to play a role in helping to develop services and projects as early as possible in the design stage.

What will result are services which are well defined, deliverable and meet the needs of the people in the region. The needs of Gwent will be evidenced by the relevant Well-being Assessment processes underpinning the Delivery Plan for the implementation of regional Well-being Plan.

It will also enable the Third Sector to grow and develop and subsequently improve their ability for delivering long-term.

Statutory Partners will: -

- Provide an opportunity for the third sector to contribute to the needs assessment and design of services and projects, where appropriate, by inviting potential providers to discussions as early as possible in the process.
- Recognise that contributing to this overall process for the third sector takes time and resources.

The Third sector will: -

- Contribute constructively to the process and focus on the needs of the community.
- Be clear about whom they represent and how they came to their views.

Collaboratively we will work together to identify: -

- Services that promote equal opportunities and equality of access for all.
- Risks to the delivery of services / projects and which partner organisation is best placed to manage the associated risk.
- Barriers to delivering the services / projects (e.g. unrealistic timeframes, slower delivery in the early part of the service/project).
- Which aspect of the services / projects would most benefit from third sector involvement.
- How the outcome of services /projects can be demonstrated (i.e. via Outcomes Based Accountability methodology), sustained and contribute to improving the long-term capacity of the third.

APPLICATION OF THE TENDER PROCESS

This section covers the process of inviting, applying for and assessing funding applications, including tender bids and giving notice of decisions. A well-managed application process allows the third sector and opportunity and time to make a well-informed and considered application.

Statutory Partners will follow the well-established procurement rules, regulations and related guidance based on principles of openness, non-discrimination and transparency.

Statutory Partners will: -

- Aim to give reasonable and sufficient notice of funding opportunities to allow the third sector time to respond.
- Publish clear timescales for applications, decisions and schedules of payment.

- Publish clear criteria against which applications and tenders will be selected and evaluated.
- Ensure that forms are clear and accessible and include all relative information so that the third sector can make an informed decision about whether to apply.
- Ensure application forms have a contact name and details for enquiries.
- Recognise it is legitimate for the third sector to include a reasonable element of overload costs in their estimates for providing a service. However, it must be recognised by the third sector that all estimated costs submitted to potential funders will be subject to close scrutiny at the application stage and also throughout the life span of successful applications. Any spend on activities not specified in contract documentation will be reclaimed by funders.
- Provide feedback on the reasons for successful and unsuccessful applications, including developmental pointers for future applications.

The Third Sector will: -

- Ensure they understand the timescales and decision-making process.
- Ensure when applying that they are eligible to do so and that they understand the requirements that their application meets the aims of the funding programme.
- Consider putting joint bids together but have clear lines of accountability.
- Properly allocate full anticipated costs in estimates for projects/services so that full cost recovery can be achieved over the life of the project.
- Recognise that there are competing demands for public spending and there may be more organisations applying than money available.
- Recognise and respect that the final decision on whether to award the money rests with the funder.

Collaboratively we will: -

- Ensure that when the third sector are funded by more than one statutory sector funding body that they have a formal dialogue between all relevant sectors to ensure there is no duplication of funding.
- Work in partnership whenever new application process / procedures / forms are developed.
- Promote contractual opportunities widely and consider proactive approaches to encourage the third sector to apply. This is important for third sector organisations who may not have applied before.

TERMS OF DELIVERY

Effective terms of delivery give clear guidance as to what is expected of the provider and by when, so that organisations can plan and deliver the best possible outputs, outcomes and impact. They also ensure that risks are recognised, understood and placed with who is best able to manage them. This contributes towards developing an effective working relationship between all parties.

Statutory Partners will: -

- Explain and agree terms of delivery with the Third Sector before the contract or funding agreement is entered into, including the actions that will be taken if the Third Sector fails to deliver.
- Discuss risks up front and place responsibility with who is best able to manage them.
- Agree with the Third Sector a simple process for controlling any changes to the agreement. This will be part of standard terms and conditions included in the contract documentation.

The Third Sector will: -

- Ensure their organisation and services delivered meet both national and local governance arrangements. For example, evidence based Unified Needs Assessments, Criminal Record Bureau checks, Child Protection, Equality and Diversity.
- Be aware of the risks they are responsible for, in particular, the risks associated with delivering the service.

Collaboratively we will: -

- Agree measurable outcomes and impacts using for example Outcomes Based Accountability methodology.

MONITORING AND REPORTING

Effective monitoring focuses on outcomes, is proportionate and not burdensome, and ensures transparency about the use of funds and what impact has been achieved. Agreed monitoring using for example Outcomes Based Accountability methodology, will ensure that any changes or problems are identified and responded to at an early stage.

Statutory Partners will: -

- Develop (where possible) standardised reporting requirements across each region within Gwent for those organisations that receive funding from more than one public sector body.

The Third Sector will:

- Recognise that public accounting inevitably requires an accurate level of reporting, using for example Outcomes Based Accountability methodology.
- Will provide monitoring information as specified in the terms of delivery and within the agreed timescales.
- Keep documentation to allow monitoring by funder's auditors as agreed.
- Recognise that the statutory sector will undertake monitoring visits to ensure compliance.
- Raise any concerns about delivery, outcomes and impact with the Commissioner as soon as they come to light.

Collaboratively we will: -

- Agree to the level and type of monitoring required by the contract, for example using Outcomes Based Accountability methodology.
- Agree measurable outcomes to be reported on and provide simple reporting formats.
- Attend meetings as agreed in the contract.

PAYMENT TERMS

Services/projects should be funded in the most effective way so that the best possible long-term outcomes are achieved. Payment terms should allow the Third Sector to plan and develop for the future and create a positive incentive to perform longer term planning and financial arrangements often represent better value for money than one year arrangements by providing greater financial stability and by reducing the inefficiencies involved in applying for new funds or renegotiating contracts.

Statutory Partners will: -

- Clearly set out agreed funding arrangements in the contract.
- It is recognised that statutory partners have different accounting frameworks, processing and payment procedures but may pay monthly in arrears where this is deemed possible.
- Implement tripartite funding arrangements, with the option of annual extensions. Three-year funding arrangements will be considered, where appropriate.

The Third Sector will: -

- Follow good practice in the use and administration of public funding and implement effective systems for financial control, management and accounting in accordance with the preferred methodologies of the commissioner.
- Comply with relevant accounting frameworks and guidance such as the Charity Commission.
- Recognise it is legitimate for funders to ask for public recognition of their funding. This may be specified in terms of delivery.
- Be supported to gain access to cash-flow and ethical loans provision via GAVO and TVA funding searches and sign posting.

Collaboratively we will: -

- Agree a clear understanding about the treatment of underspends/overspends.

CONCLUDING A FINANCIAL PARTNERSHIP

In some cases, funding of projects / services comes to an end. There are many reasons including a review of strategic or developmental funding or the payment was for a particular purpose which has been achieved. This Code seeks to ensure that all organisations are committed to make this process clear and well managed, in order to minimise the impact of service withdrawal on those receiving the particular services within the relevant County Borough.

Statutory Partners will: -

- Inform the Third Sector in writing if there are problems identified in the provision of services via the contract / SLA.
- Give 3 months' notice of the end of service level agreements or contracts in order for the Third Sector to prepare alternative plans / exit strategies.
- Give the reasons for ending the funding.

The Third Sector will: -

- Where it is having financial or other difficulties, the third sector Trustees / Directors will inform in writing their concerns to the named officer on the contract.
- Recognise that funding may end if priorities change, subject to the terms of the existing contract.
- Recognise that funding may be terminated if outcomes are not delivered.
- Identify and manage potential risks to reduce any potential impact on both users and Organisations.
- Ensure they adhere to their duties as good employers. For example, by giving required redundancy periods.

Collaboratively we will: -

- Ensure contracts include a financial management plan or exit strategy when, or if, funding should cease.
- Identify and resolve any problems quickly.

Application and Review of the Code

The implementation of the good practice guidance in this Code will be the responsibility of those signed up to the Compact agreement. The Code will be monitored by the relevant structures outlined in Appendix 1-5.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

If disagreements (not involving funding issues) prove difficult to resolve after all avenues have been pursued they will be referred by GAVO and TVA to the Local Area Lead Delivery Partnerships, with un-resolution here to be taken to the Gwent PSB for further consideration. The Terms of Reference of both of these groups are outlined in the terms of reference for each.

Further Information and Comments

For more information on the Partnership Agreement, please contact GAVO or TVA.

<https://www.gavo.org.uk/>
<https://tvawales.org.uk/>

For more information on the Gwent Well-being Plan, please see the following.

<https://www.gwentpsb.org/>

Compact Partner Contact Details – to be confirmed and updated

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Email: info@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Contact Centre/C2BG

Telephone: 01495 311556

Website: <https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/>

Caerphilly County Borough Council

Penallta House,
Tredomen Business Park,
Ystrad Mynach,
Hengoed
CF82 7PG

Telephone: 01443 815588

Website: <https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk>

Monmouthshire County Borough Council

County Hall,
Rhadyr,
Usk
NP15 1GA

Telephone: 01633 644644

Twitter [@monmouthshirecc](https://twitter.com/monmouthshirecc).

Website: <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/>

Newport County Borough Council

Civic Centre,
Godfrey Rd,
Newport
NP20 4UR

Telephone: 01633 656656

Email : business.services@newport.gov.uk

Website: <https://www.newport.gov.uk/en/Home.aspx>

Torfaen County Borough Council

Civic Centre,
Pontypool
NP4 6YB

Telephone: 01495 762200

Website: <https://www.torfaen.gov.uk/intro-splash.aspx>

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

St Cadoc's Hospital
Lodge Road
CAERLEON NP18 3XQ

Tel: 01633 436700

E-mail: abuhb.enquiries@wales.nhs.uk

Website: www.wales.nhs.uk/siteplus/866/home

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Forest View Business Park
Llantrisant
Pontyclun
South Wales
CF72 8LX

Telephone: 01443 232000
E-mail: swfs@southwales-fire.gov.uk
Website: www.southwales-fire.gov.uk

Natural Resources Wales

Natural Resources Wales
Customer Care Centre
Ty Cambria
29 Newport Rd
Cardiff
CF24 0TP

Tel: 0300 0653000
Email: enquiries@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk
Website: <https://naturalresources.wales>

The Chief Constable for Gwent

Police Headquarters, Croesyceiliog, Cwmbran, Gwent. NP44 2XJ

Telephone: 01633 838 111
Email: contact@gwent.pnn.police.uk
Website: www.gwent.police.uk

The Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner

Police Headquarters, Croesyceiliog, Cwmbran, Gwent. NP44 2XJ

Telephone: 01633 642200 Fax: 01633 643095
Email: commissioner@gwent.pnn.police.uk
Website: www.gwent.pcc.police.uk

National Probation Service for Wales

Probation Office
Usk House,
Lower Dock St,
Newport
NP20 2GD

Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO)

Beechwood House
Beechwood Park
Christchurch Road
NEWPORT
NP19 8AJ

Website: www.gavo.org.uk
Email: info@gavo.org.uk

Torfaen Voluntary Alliance (TVA)

Portland Buildings,
Commercial St,
Pontypool
NP4 6JS

Website: <https://tvawales.org.uk/>

Email: info@tvawales.org.uk

Telephone: 01495 365610

The Welsh Ministers

Yr Is-adran Trechu Tlodi a Chefnogi Teuluoedd / Tackling Poverty and Supporting Families Division
Yr Adran Cymunedau a Trechu Tlodi / Communities and Tackling Poverty Department
Y Grwp Addysg, Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol a'r Gymraeg / Education, Social Justice and Welsh Language Group
Llywodraeth Cymru / Welsh Government
Rhyd-y-car / Rhydycar
Merthyr Tudful / Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 1UZ

Telephone: 0300 062 8501 / 07794053197

Public Health Wales

2 Capital Quarter,
Tyndall St,
Cardiff
CF10 4BZ

Website: <https://phw.nhs.wales/>

Telephone: 029 2022 7744

A representative of the Registered Social Landlords in the region

Tai Calon
Solis One,
Griffin Lane,
Rising Sun Industrial Estate,
Blaina,
Blaenau Gwent,
NP13 3JW

Website: <https://www.taicalon.org/>

Telephone: 0300 303 1717

A representative from the tertiary academic sector

University South Wales (Newport)
Usk Way,
Newport
NP20 2BP

Website: <https://www.southwales.ac.uk/>

Email: enquiries@southwales.ac.uk

Telephone: (01443) 4 82011

A representative (Chair or Vice-Chair) from the Gwent Strategic Well-being Action Group

Chair of GSWAG sub group

Torfaen County Council

Glantorfaen Road,

Pontypool,

NP4 6YB

Website: <https://www.torfaen.gov.uk/intro-splash.aspx>

Telephone: 01495 742304