

Third Sector Strategy for Communities and Local Government

Discussion Paper – June 2007





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Discussion Paper

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Foreword

by the Rt Hon Ruth Kelly MP

Our vision is of prosperous and cohesive communities offering a safe, healthy and sustainable environment for all. To achieve this, we need to engage and involve communities in decisions that impact on their everyday lives and strengthen our efforts to ensure access to quality services for all.



An independent and diverse third sector can help realise these ambitions. I value the sector's role as an advocate and campaigner for individuals and groups who need a stronger voice in our communities; as a catalyst for cohesion between communities because it is trusted and can form those vital links to bring people together; and as a force for social justice and tackling inequalities. I also welcome the increasingly important role of the third sector in the design and delivery of services.

Although very different, the roles and functions of my Department and the sector are complementary. By working together we can add value to, and achieve, outcomes that neither might realise acting alone.

There is much that we as a Department can do to improve the way we work with the third sector, and to support the Government's goal of a thriving third sector. There is also much that we can do to ensure that the third sector is able to partner local government and communities in making places where people are proud to live.

This discussion paper sets out how we plan to make Communities and Local Government better at engaging with the third sector and enabling it to be an effective local partner.

We want to hear from you on how we can work together to achieve our common goals.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruth Kelly".

The Rt Hon Ruth Kelly MP

1. Introduction

The Department and large parts of the third sector share the same broad vision and aim of prosperous and cohesive communities. In response to our Capability Review¹, we committed to publishing a third sector strategy to set a framework for effective, on-going engagement with the sector at all spatial levels.

The third sector incorporates a huge diversity of non-governmental organisations. They are value driven and principally re-invest surpluses or raise funds to further social, environmental or cultural objectives. The sector includes community groups, voluntary organisations, faith and equalities groups, charities, social enterprises, co-operatives, mutuals and housing associations.²

Communities and Local Government works closely with the Office of the Third Sector and HM Treasury. Our proposals seek to complement and support the Government's goal of a thriving and vibrant third sector, particularly the emerging findings from the review of "The future role of the third sector in social and economic regeneration".

We are proud of what we already do to enable a healthy sector. We involve third sector organisations (and their umbrella groups) in shaping and designing our policies. For example, programmes such as *Supporting People* have developed best practice in commissioning and procurement, established a consistent quality framework and helped the sector to measure how effectively they are delivering positive outcomes for the people they are there to help. *Strong and Prosperous Communities*, the Local Government White Paper published last autumn, set out our clear expectation that the sector should be a key partner to local government in creating strong and sustainable communities.

But we can do and achieve more through effective engagement at all levels. As a strategic department we want to consistently lead and enthuse our partners.

¹ The Communities and Local Government Capability Review can be found at http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/reform/capability_reviews/publications/pdf/Capability_Review_DCLG.pdf

² The detail of our relationship with housing associations, including those registered with the Housing Corporation (known as Registered Social Landlords), is being considered by the Cave review.

This discussion paper sets out our proposals for improving our engagement with the third sector. It takes account of the joint Office of the Third Sector and HM Treasury review; the Local Community Sector Taskforce, which was established by Government to consider the implications of the end of the Single Regeneration Budget and decline in European funding of the sector; *Making assets work – the Quirk Review of community management and ownership of assets*, and advice from a sounding group of key stakeholders and individuals, which met during early 2007 to help inform the shape of the strategy.

The following sections set out how we propose to improve our relationship with the third sector, by:

- improving how we work with the sector;
- enabling the sector to be an effective local partner in place shaping;
- moving to a more strategic partnership and funding relationship with the sector; and
- supporting sustainable investment in community anchors

Over the next three months we want to hear from the third sector, our staff and other stakeholders on the direction on travel we propose. Details of how to respond are contained at the end of the document. We will publish our final strategy in the Autumn.

2. A thriving third sector

Since 1997 the third sector has grown in scale and impact. There are more organisations than ever before. Overall income has increased. More people are volunteering. More people are setting up social enterprises. The sector is playing a greater role in supporting communities and tackling inequalities, in creating opportunity and enterprise, and in designing and supplying public services.

Over the last ten years the Government has supported the sector. It has agreed the Compact setting out a framework for relations and partnership working.³ It has invested in the capacity of the sector, extended financial support and introduced new forms of organisations and funds. There are significant areas of public service delivery where the Government is opening opportunities for the third sector, for example, in terms of local services such as specialist bus services, waste collection, recycling and other neighbourhood services and community sport and youth services.⁴

The pace of change has increased with the establishment of the Office of the Third Sector to champion third sector interests across Government. The last year has also seen the establishment of the Commissioner for the Compact and publication of cross-government action plans on public services and social enterprise.⁵

The current Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR 07) includes a review of “The future role of the third sector in social and economic regeneration”, which included the largest ever consultation with the sector.⁶ It will set out how Government and the sector can work together to meet the challenges and opportunities of the decade ahead.

Yet within this overall healthy climate the third sector faces challenges particularly smaller and medium sized community organisations, including those representing Black and Minority Ethnic communities, that form the majority of the sector. These organisations contribute significantly to the agenda of Communities and Local Government. Accordingly, our focus in this strategy is on how we can respond to the challenges facing community organisations.

³ The Compact on Relations between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in England, 1998 and five codes in subsequent years www.thecompact.org.uk

⁴ *Developing the Local Government Services Market to support a long term strategy*, Communities and Local Government (2006).

⁵ *Partnership in Public Services: An Action Plan for third sector involvement and Social Enterprise Action Plan: Scaling the Heights* are available at www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk third sector

⁶ Details of the joint review OTS and HMT review can be found at: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/third_sector_review/review_background

3. Our relationship with the third sector

Communities and Local Government is responsible for national policy on local government, better homes and neighbourhoods, better local services and environment, regeneration and investment, equalities and social justice, and building safe, tolerant and inclusive communities.

By virtue of these responsibilities the Department is crucial in creating the environment within which the third sector operates, and to its future. Our responsibilities require a strong relationship with the third sector, which contributes to the department's objectives through:

- bridging divides between different communities and bringing people together, reducing tensions and helping to create tolerant and cohesive communities;
- delivering community-based solutions and action, empowering communities to make a difference;
- playing a leading role in the delivery of the Supporting People programme, tackling and preventing homelessness, social housing, tenant engagement, and transforming neighbourhoods;
- bringing a user perspective and involvement of local people in the services they receive, including those who may be 'hard to reach', disadvantaged or excluded;
- helping citizens to represent their views to the state and helping to build accountable local government; and
- supporting community enterprises to realise economic opportunities, address under representation of particular groups especially the most marginalized in society, regenerate places, and help communities to thrive.

At the national level we engage with some key policy organisations that advocate and act on behalf of the sector itself, including groups such as the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA), and Urban Forum. These organisations, and others like them, operate across government although many have a close relationship with Community and Local Government. There are also organisations that work with specific policy areas relevant to the delivery of the department's priorities. These can range from policy focussed organisations to campaign bodies and those that we fund to support delivery. For example, the Department is providing £16m funding to the third sector in 2007/08 in direct homelessness grants to support prevention activities and support services.

Case study 1

Groundwork is an environmental charity that supports communities in need, working with partners to help improve the quality of people's lives, their prospects and potential and the places where they live, work and play. The local environment provides a 'neutral ground' in which to foster dialogue while concerns for the global environment represent a 'common cause' for previously disparate groups.

In 2003-06 Groundwork delivered 18,000 local regeneration projects helping people of all ages contribute 1.7 million volunteer days to improve neighbourhoods.

'70% of people involved said that they had had contact with people from a different ethnic group or culture. Over a third had made contact with people new to their neighbourhoods.'

Groundwork Birmingham community-led environmental improvements – Williamson Joyce Research Ltd

We believe that there is potential for us to enable the third sector to do even more. For example, the Department and local government working in partnership with the sector to build greater community cohesion and improve economic opportunities for disadvantaged groups.

Case studies 2 and 3

The Central London Youth Development Trust, funded through the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund, has developed a new initiative to deliver some multi-faith cultural activities to reduce misunderstanding and ignorance between different religious groups or spiritual traditions and culture. A new Multi-Faith Cultural Forum aims to be a place for young people to meet, share their views and engage in cultural activities. Abdul Aziz Toki commented: 'The project has engaged young people of diverse communities by giving them a sense of ownership of the programme.'

Social Enterprise London will work with the Department to carry out an in-depth study into understanding the barriers and incentives for ethnic minority women entering social enterprise; and how best to encourage this vastly underrepresented group to consider this as a model of enterprise.

Ethnic minority women have lower employment rates than the rest of the population (15% gap – 59.6% against 74.7%). For Pakistani and Bangladeshi women it is particularly low – 24.0% and 24.2% respectively. These poor employment prospects persist despite their increasing performance in education. The benefits of this work will include helping regenerate deprived areas (29 per cent of Social Enterprises are located in the 20 per cent most deprived wards), increased social cohesion and improvement of overall economic activity of ethnic minority women.

In *Strong and Prosperous Communities* we set out proposals to strengthen the role of the sector as a key partner for local government.⁷

Our policy responsibilities for local government make our working relationship with the sector and its umbrella bodies particularly important. For example, we are working with third sector stakeholders to explore the impact for the sector of local authority staff whose work is outsourced to third sector agencies but who remain entitled to access to the Local Government Pension Scheme or a broadly comparable scheme.

The majority of the third sector's relationships occur at the local level. This reflects the structure of the sector – nearly 90% of which are small neighbourhood based community organisations. These are often mutual aid or interest groups with no staff or physical assets, often with low levels of income and dependent on voluntary support. The best of such organisations have a strong connection to and understanding of local community interests.

The majority of our financial relationships with the third sector are now indirect – mediated through others such as national intermediary bodies and through partnership arrangements such as Local Area Agreements, where the role of the Government Offices is increasingly important. We expect this trend toward indirect funding for the sector will continue.

⁷ *Strong and Prosperous Communities: the Local Government White Paper* (2006) see www.communities.gov.uk

4. Our ambition

Our ambition is for the third sector and the Department to have an effective and on-going relationship that adds value and helps achieve our common objectives.

The sector's strengths make it relevant to our strategic priorities. It works with the most disadvantaged people and places and engages people in social and environmental challenges. It can help strengthen cohesion by building bridges and bonds within communities. It provides voice and representation for citizens and communities. We welcome and appreciate the sector's diverse roles.

The sector has the potential to do more, but it faces challenges. We want to work with the sector to address some of those challenges, in particular, to:

- recognise the role of the third sector in our work;
- reduce inconsistency in how we work with the third sector;
- listen and learn from the voice of the third sector;
- create a framework for strong local partnerships; and
- ensure fairness in service delivery.

Whilst recognising its independence, we want to encourage the sector itself to contribute fully to the new local government landscape, including collaborating on local representation, engagement and involvement, reaching out to all sections of the community and being user-focused.

All of these challenges need to be addressed in the context of increasing efficiency.

The following sections set out how we propose to improve our relationship with the third sector, by:

- improving how we work with the sector;
- enabling the sector to be an effective local partner in place shaping;
- moving to a more strategic partnership and funding relationship with the sector; and
- supporting sustainable investment in community anchors

4 – 1: Ways Of Working

If we are to lead and enthuse our stakeholders, we must build on existing good practice and ensure that we are demonstrating this in everything that we do.

We have meaningful relationships with the sector in many areas of our work. The sector is providing knowledge, experience and expertise which are helping to improve the effectiveness of our policies and programmes. But this approach is not consistently and corporately applied across the Department at the moment.

Case studies 4 and 5

Supporting People – Two-thirds of the £1.7bn of the Supporting People programme is delivered through the third sector. The policy team has close links with the sector, involving them in their Supporting people reference group, value improvement board and outcomes working group. Emma Daniel, Chief Executive of SITRA, commented that they use ‘meaningful consultations making good use of infrastructure partners to inform the design and implementation of consultations’.

Developing this strategy – In developing this strategy we worked with a small, informal sounding group comprising some of our stakeholders and key individuals. This allowed us to get a better understanding of the issues facing the sector as we were developing this document. However, to ensure we hear the views of as many organisations as possible, we are putting this document out for discussion.

We can do more to apply Compact principles to our corporate and individual ways of working, for example, to;

- raise awareness of the Compact across the Department and NDPBs and regional offices;
- ensure that we are involving the sector early in policy formation; and
- ensure the sector has the time and opportunity to respond to consultations (generally a minimum of 12 weeks).

We should uphold the principle of the sector’s independence and support staff to fulfil the actions that put the Compact into practice.

Our proposals

In order to improve the ways in which we work with the third sector, we propose to:

- build the capacity of our staff to work with the third sector; promote greater awareness of the importance of the third sector in realising our aims; and share good practice experience of working with the sector. During June we will hold a third sector month as part of our departmental transformation programme. This will encourage staff to consider how the sector contributes to their work and how the relationship could be improved.
- take into account both the impact of our policies on the third sector and the potential role of the sector to support better outcomes from those policies. We are discussing with the Commissioner for the Compact how to ‘proof’ our policies and programmes.
- consider how our NDPBs can take up the application of Compact principles and ways of working, in partnership with the Commissioner for the Compact.
- monitor and respond to alleged breaches of the Compact, with the aim of eliminating all breaches.
- establish a Third Sector Partnership Board of between 15-20 members to provide oversight and facilitate critical challenge between the sector, local government and the department. This Board will also provide challenge on the effective implementation of the Local Government White Paper proposals (as set out in section 4.2).
- create an internal Programme Board which will bring together those with responsibility for key areas of our engagement with the third sector from across the Department

Q1. How effectively do we implement Compact principles?

4 – 2: Local Partnerships In Place-Shaping

The sector should be a key and respected partner to local government. The sector is diverse and can play a number of different roles – including representation and advocacy, lobbying and influencing policy, shaping and designing services and also delivery of responsive public services. Local authorities and their partners should actively work with sector organisations and enhance their contribution to engaging local people in setting and delivering local priorities.

The Local Community sector taskforce highlighted the need to reinforce the contribution the community sector can make to improving local quality of life through Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and Local Area Agreements (LAAs).

LSPs are the main vehicles for developing a vision – the Sustainable Communities Strategy – for transforming a place and for tackling hard, cross-cutting issues. LSPs are the forums where local partners contribute their own strengths to the shared task of building prosperous and cohesive communities and improving local services. They offer an opportunity for the third sector to make its unique contribution alongside local authorities, business and other service providers operating at the local level such as the Primary Care Trust and the local police. LSPs also provide the forum for agreeing the priorities of LAAs, which will secure better outcomes for each area. LAAs will become the central delivery contract between central Government and local Government and its partners.

The best Local Authorities and their partners already work well with the third sector. However, in some areas engagement is inconsistent at best and weak at worst; there is much further to go. We want the best of partnership working between the sector and local government to be the norm everywhere, not the exception.

Overall, *Strong and Prosperous Communities*, the Local Government White Paper, and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill:

- gives a stronger voice to citizens and communities to help shape the places they live and the services they receive.
- encourages local authorities to provide stronger and more strategic leadership for the places they serve; and
- reduces the amount of central prescription so that local authorities and their partners are able to respond to local needs and demands.

The chapter on the Third Sector in the White Paper set out key messages for the sector including:

- Establishing a clear expectation that the starting point for grant funding will be three years in all cases, except where this does not represent best value.
- Setting out that grants, alongside contracts have a crucial role and should be used where they are more appropriate, particularly in relation to small community groups.

- Creating a new duty to inform, consult and involve local citizens, local voluntary and community groups and businesses.
- Establishing the ‘Community Call for Action’, which provides a new opportunity for the sector to work with local councilors (elected representatives) in raising issues of importance to the community.
- Setting the clear expectation that third sector organizations will be actively involved in Local Strategic Partnerships, their thematic partnership and in developing Local Area Agreements, and promoting a strong and healthy local third sector through Sustainable Community Strategies.
- Increasing the involvement of users and communities in commissioning decisions.
- Promoting the third sector’s role in public service delivery. There needs to be a level-playingfield for the sector.
- Reviewing the barriers and incentives to the transfer of assets and facilities to local community groups.

Our proposals

We will support the third sector in building effective partnerships with local authorities and their partners, and encourage such action through our national policy responsibilities for local government. We will:

- Work with the Office of the Third Sector in developing our delivery plans for CSR07 on how best to support the third sector. This includes identifying any potential national indicators for inclusion within the local government performance framework indicator set to be published later this year.
- Involve third sector stakeholders in our discussions about how best to develop the local government place-shaping role, so that the sector’s views about opportunities, risks and the role that the sector might play are taken into account. With a wide range of stakeholders we will consider the role and need for statutory guidance, including how it can support effective involvement of the third sector. As part of this process we will explore challenges around the new duty to involve and what role the sector may play in implementation. We will consult on any draft guidance after the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill gains Royal Assent, which is anticipated in the Autumn 2007.
- Work with the Audit Commission to develop proposals for Comprehensive Area Assessments that judge the effectiveness of local partnership working, including the involvement of the sector.

- Set out our commitment to three year grant funding in statutory guidance to local government and reflected in the Comprehensive Area Assessment. This will be supported by best practice on funding issues (including the key funding and procurement principles contained in the Compact), and other capacity building measures, developed and supported by the Local Government Association (LGA), Audit Commission and Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountability (CIPFA).
- Develop a national improvement strategy for local authorities as part of the new performance framework. The national improvement strategy includes consideration of a range of improvement priorities including leadership, partnership working, community empowerment, corporate effectiveness and efficiency. It will examine how best to co-ordinate third sector capacity building, for example Capacity Builders and ChangeUP, with the third sector capacity building efforts in Local Authorities and LSPs.
- Work with the Office of the Third Sector on how to deliver the £80m fund for small grants for local community organisations announced in the Budget 2007. We are keen to explore mechanisms that enable local partnerships to complement existing funding and maximise its impact for local organisations.
- Work with national umbrella bodies such as NCVO, NAVCA, Urban Forum, Community Alliance, and equalities bodies to consider principles for how the third sector can organise itself to ensure that it is effectively represented on Local Strategic partnerships, and more widely in public life.

Q2. In what other ways could we help to improve the effectiveness of engagement with the third sector at the:

- i) regional and sub-regional levels; and**
- ii) local level?**

4 – 3: Strategic partners

The creation of Communities and Local Government has brought together a range of responsibilities that have had different approaches and arrangements for engaging the sector in the past.

The Department works with hundreds of organisations across its responsibilities. These relationships exist in a variety of forms and many are related to specific projects and places.

If we are to develop long term, meaningful engagement with the sector, we must be more strategic and coherent in our approach – without losing the value of reaching out to a diverse network of organisations.

Our aim is to adopt a more consistent approach that will improve clarity, efficiency and effectiveness of our engagement with the third sector.

Our proposal

We are looking to develop our departmental network of strategic partners to advise us and provide effective links between national and local action on our priorities, ensuring the voice of smaller organisations are heard. This would enhance our general communication and engagement procedures.

We will:

- develop a ‘Strategic Partners’ network for engaging third sector organisations which provide a strategic voice and can support local action in this Department’s policy areas.
- look to our Strategic Partners to support both specific areas of our responsibilities and our overall vision. We would expect the successful organisations to work together and provide a bridge to smaller local organisations which provide knowledge and experience at the grass roots level.
- develop, subject to the outcome of CSR07, a new Strategic Partners Grant Programme. Not all organisations who apply for strategic partner status will wish to apply for a Strategic Partners grant. We intend to re-focus our special grants programme on providing core 3-year funding certainty for Strategic Partners via a bidding round and encourage the pooling of small grants programmes to the third sector, through the Strategic Partners arrangement. We believe this would provide greater certainty, efficiency and the potential to develop deeper relationships.

Please note that only organisations that have registered their interest in becoming strategic partners, and have been given this status, will be eligible to apply for funding.

Q3. Would your organisation wish to be considered to become a strategic partner?

We are inviting expressions of interest from national organisations or national or regional partnerships with local reach interested in becoming a strategic partner by the end of this consultation period. The criteria for strategic partners and a form to express interest is available at www.communities.gov.uk.

4 – 4: Sustainable investment

A priority for Communities and Local Government is to support the voluntary and community sector to become more sustainable and enterprising.

Following the wind-down of Single Regeneration Budget funding, the Local Community Sector Taskforce highlighted the need for asset development and enterprise support for those organisations which have the capacity to take on those roles. It argued that if community enterprises are going to make a transformational change from short-term, grant funded “projects” to sustainable regeneration keystones, they need to build up a basket of stable and secure independent income streams to resource their development and growth.⁸ A critical element will be the nurturing of an income generating asset base. Firm Foundations, the Government’s approach to community capacity building, recognises the need for sustainable investment.⁹

The third sector review consultation highlighted the importance of developing community assets to enable community organisations to generate their own wealth, deliver services and strengthen community engagement.

The value of local community-based third sector delivery in creating a local multiplier effect, locking in, circulating and re-distributing investment within disadvantaged communities in particular is well attested. As well as providing a way to encourage sustainable growth of community enterprise in areas of geographical disadvantage, there are also benefits to be accrued from the promotion of sustainable asset development for community enterprises that serve communities of interest, including equality groups that may be at risk of social and economic exclusion, as a way not only of building bonding social capital, but also bridging social capital.

⁸ The Local Community Sector Taskforce (2006)

⁹ *Firm Foundations: the Government framework for community capacity building*, Home Office 2004

In September 2006, Communities Secretary Ruth Kelly commissioned Barry Quirk, the Chief Executive of Lewisham Council, to review the barriers and incentives affecting the transfer of public assets to community management and ownership. The Quirk review was launched on 15 May and proposed action in five key areas.¹⁰ These included encouragement and support for a more corporate and strategic approach to asset management by local authorities and their statutory partners, developed in partnership with the local third sector, with asset transfer to communities as a serious option; and the smarter investment of public funds designated for community-led asset-based developments.

Working with the Office of the Third Sector, we are exploring the increasing potential of approaches involving “community anchor” organisations in achieving this priority. These are independent community led organisations with multi-purpose functions, which provide a focal point for local communities and community organisations, and for community services. They often own and manage community assets, and support small community organisations to reach out across the community. They have the potential to promote and support the objectives of Communities and Local Government, including in building prosperous and cohesive communities.

Case study 6

Bradford – Action for Business Ltd is a community development trust based in the heart of Manningham, focus of the inner city riots (the centre was the one public building left undamaged, because people valued it). Since 1996, ABL has been running the purpose built Carlisle Business Centre (CBC) – a managed workspace with a total of nearly 100 offices, workshops, stores, crafts units, and conferencing and training facilities for rent and hire by small private businesses and community and voluntary organizations. In 2003, with finance from the Adventure Capital Fund, it purchased the freehold from the City Council: an asset transfer at less than market value, reflecting the added community benefit.

The Government has already announced a Community Asset Transfer Fund of £30m which will be administered by the BIG lottery fund. This Fund will be used to reburish local authority buildings so that they can be transferred to community-led third sector organisations. The Budget also announced new funding for small community groups, and we are working with the Office of the Third Sector on how this resource is delivered.

¹⁰ *Making Assets Work: The Quirk Review of community management and ownership of public assets*, Communities and Local Government 2007.

Our proposals

As part of the Government's plans to implement the Quirk review's proposals¹¹, we are considering how supporting and developing community anchors can help build greater enterprise and sustainability across the sector. In particular, we are examining the feasibility of supporting "community anchors" to stimulate and develop enterprise and self-sufficiency through transfer of assets to community ownership and management, and through the expansion of earned revenue.

Subject to CSR07, we are considering approaches that:

- focus on third sector organisations of sufficient scale and capability to develop and deliver our objectives across the country;
- facilitate and incentivise partnership with local authorities and LSPs, and, as far as possible, makes use of existing infrastructure;.
- expects the anchor organisations to support small community groups in that neighbourhood, particularly those groups who are too small to own assets themselves but often need space and support to operate; and
- involve specialist financial intermediaries with expertise in the field and the ability to achieve high leverage ratios. We would expect these organisations to work with potential recipients to develop sound proposals and mitigate risks.

Q4. Do you agree with our focus on community anchors?

Q5. Are there good models of regional and sub-regional bodies, local authorities, or LSPs working strategically to support community anchor organisations in conjunction with the local third sector?

¹¹ *Opening the Transfer Window: the Government's response to the Quirk Review of community management and ownership of public assets*, Communities and Local Government 2007.

5. Measuring progress

Our strategy seeks effective on-going engagement at all levels.

We will succeed when:

- the third sector and our other stakeholders agree they and the Department work well together and this is evidenced by better outcomes.
- we minimise breaches of the Compact by the Department.
- we can see a network of sustainable community anchor organisations serving their community and support other community groups.

We will monitor progress through a Three Sector Partnership Board, and internal Programme Board, which will have a responsibility to oversee and monitor progress against our objectives.

Q6. Are there major gaps in our proposals for improving our strategic engagement with the third sector?

6. Next steps

We are working to publish a final strategy in late autumn as follows:

During June Discussions with staff during ‘third sector month’

During July Regional consultation events

20 September End of consultation period

Autumn 2007 CSR settlement expected

Late Autumn Final strategy

By end 2007 Detailed implementation underway

7. Your views

As part of our transformational programme, staff are being encouraged to engage during a programme of events running during June.

A regional series of events is running during July to hear the views about our proposals from stakeholders around the country. We are inviting comments by 20 September.

There will be a discussion forum at <http://forum.communities.gov.uk/thirdsector>

Alternatively send you comments by email to:
thirdsector@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Or by post to:

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Any queries about this discussion paper should be sent to this address or, preferably, to the email address above.

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