

## 150 Delegates, 4 Venues and a DVD!

When the South Lanarkshire Compact Development Group set the task of running four simultaneous consultation events, and sharing outcomes across the venues, we knew we had a challenge on our hands!

However, the commitment and enthusiasm of the those involved in planning and running the events resulted in a highly successful day and proved the effectiveness of the Compact partnership in action.

The events were planned as part of the Compact consultation process with voluntary sector representatives in South Lanarkshire. The aim was to give delegates some more information on the emerging partnership agreement, and to influence the content of the Compact and the related action plan.

The day's programme involved delegates viewing a DVD, produced with South Lanarkshire Voluntary TV, followed by a group based questionnaire. Delegates were then asked to prioritise the actions required to make the Compact happen, and got the opportunity to share their findings across the venues.



Coalburn Miners Welfare hosted the rural event



Delegates arrive at Rutherglen Town Hall

## Background to the Compact

The aim of the Compact is to ensure effective partnership working between the public and voluntary sectors in South Lanarkshire.

Both sectors work hard to provide services and activities to the local communities they serve. Often there is an existing relationship across the sectors. The aim of the Compact is to solidify and secure that relationship where it exists, and establish and support new partnerships where required.

In South Lanarkshire Compact development was initiated by a report commissioned by the South Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership to review the support infrastructure in place for the community and voluntary sector in South Lanarkshire.

Discussions on progressing the review resulted in the establishment of the Compact Development Group consisting of public and voluntary sector partners. The Group had it's initial meeting in May 2008 and set the ambitious target of establishing the Compact within one year.



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## East Kilbride

Twenty-nine delegates attended the East Kilbride event held in the Council Chambers of the Civic Centre. The event was hosted by Bill Crow, Convener of CVS Hamilton/East Kilbride, and Jim McCaffer, South Lanarkshire Council's Head of Regeneration.

After watching the Compact DVD the delegates took part in the group questionnaire exercise. The discussions revealed that communication at a local level between the sectors was largely positive, but that this could be lost in the upper tiers of public sector management.

Raising awareness of the sector and creating networks were proposed as quick ways to improve relationships, while the importance of sufficient funding was highlighted for the longer term solutions.

On the whole the delegates felt the Compact would be a positive factor for the voluntary sector, and that the process was highlighting the role the sector already plays in delivering services and outcomes.

The group prioritisation exercise highlighted resources, the importance of volunteers, and the role of the sector in policy making and service delivery as being the most important for the East Kilbride delegates.

*“This is a positive move and will help formalise how we work together”*



Working hard in East Kilbride Civic Centre



Rutherglen delegates prioritise the action points

## Rutherglen

Rutherglen Town Hall saw 46 delegates attending the event. Norman Rae, Chairperson of Friends of Cambuslang Park, welcomed the representatives, and was joined by Robert Peat, Head of Planning with NHS Lanarkshire.

The DVD was shown on the big screen, which made the opening helicopter shots particularly realistic! Afterwards delegates worked on the group questionnaire and reported that relations with the public sector were more positive where Service Level Agreements were in place, and there was praise for the increased level of consultation with the voluntary sector

A lively debate was held with each table feeding back verbally. The need for improved communication was a recurring theme and there was a plea for prompt payment of funding.

Greater involvement of the sector in decision making was highlighted a number of times in the feed-back, while general funding issues were primary for many delegates.

The groups were almost unanimous in believing the Compact would benefit the voluntary sector in South Lanarkshire providing the actions raised were fully pursued.

The final exercise saw the delegates prioritising the need to increase the role of the voluntary sector in policy, decision-making and service delivery at all levels in South Lanarkshire.

## Coalburn

Coalburn Miners Welfare One Stop Shop hosted the rural event. Delegates were welcomed by Frank Burns, CEO of ALVO, together with Simon Carey, South Lanarkshire Council's Regeneration and Inclusion Manager.

After viewing the DVD the delegates moved on to discuss the issues raised by the group questionnaire. Having a key contact within public sector bodies was seen to contribute to good relations, and Service Level Agreements were again highlighted as a positive development.

Rural issues quickly came to the fore when discussion moved on to what could be improved. The higher cost of rural services were seen to make them more susceptible to cuts when savings were being made.

The need for a true partnership between the sectors was emphasised, one that recognised the role the voluntary sector plays in meeting targets such as those in the Single Outcome Agreement.

The development of cross-sector networks was seen as crucial in improving relationships between the sectors. Similarly the need for local people to be shaping services was highlighted, as was the provision of support to enable communities to be self-determining.

While the majority felt the Compact would benefit the voluntary sector, this was balanced by some healthy caution based on previous experience. It was felt the Compact has to be an operational/action orientated process, and it has to be steered by both sectors.

The concluding prioritisation exercise created considerable interest with delegates taking the opportunity to re-word the original statements. Eventually the process resulted in the adoption of the priority to increase the role of the voluntary sector in policy, decision-making and service delivery, together with a priority to "rural proof" all policies and services.



Watching the DVD at Fairhill

## Hamilton

Fairhill Lifestyle Centre in Hamilton was the busiest venue on the day with 49 delegates attending. Ian Barcroft, Chairperson of SolVE, hosted the event together with Cllr John Murray, Depute Chair of South Lanarkshire Council's Enterprise Resources.

Relationships were felt to be positive when services complemented one another. Having a named contact person within the public sector was also deemed to aid good relationships.

Funding was the issue all groups highlighted as requiring improvement. Delegates reporting funding was decreasing while referrals were increasing. Funding levels which allowed full cost recovery were essential.

Improved two-way communication was seen as important as was greater awareness of the role of the voluntary sector with public sector partners.

The groups were largely undecided on whether the Compact would benefit the voluntary sector, with the need for commitment from all partners emphasised in its potential success.

Given the focus of the discussion on funding, it was unsurprising that the action point on that subject was the venue's top priority. After that priorities on the sector's involvement in policy and planning, and to supporting a strong and diverse voluntary sector were highlighted.

## Compact DVD

The DVD viewed by delegates on the day was produced with South Lanarkshire Voluntary Television. The DVD highlighted the role of the voluntary and public sectors in South Lanarkshire and suggested one way to work better together was through a Compact.

Stephen Maxwell, SCVO Associate Director, gave some historical background to Compacts and their implementation in other areas. Paul White, Director of Networks at SCVO highlighted how the process of developing a Compact can bring organisations closer together and raise awareness and understanding.

Geoff Pearson from the Scottish Government's Third Sector Division, commented on the central role Ministers such as John Swinney saw for the sector in delivering services and outcomes. Cllr Chris Thompson, Chair of South Lanarkshire's Enterprise Resources, gave his Council's support and commitment to the Compact.

Cllr Thompson viewed the Compact as crucial in closer working between the sectors and in identifying gaps in service. The Compact would enable the sectors to provide services which complemented one another and filled these gaps.

Copies of the DVD can be made available on request and the production can be viewed through SLVtv's player at

<http://www.southlanarkshire.tv/>



## Contact

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## What Happens Next?

The outcomes from the consultation events will help determine the final content of the Compact. This will be fed into the South Lanarkshire Community Planning processes for partnership approval and adoption.

The document then becomes "live" and the real work begins in the Compact implementation phase. This will be guided by the Compact action plan and will be subject to rigorous monitoring and review by the emerging Compact structures.

More information on the Compact, including full transcripts of the 5 February events, is available at the Compact website

<http://slcompact.synthasite.com/>

## Acknowledgements

The events of 5 February were only possible due to the commitment and effort of a large number of partner organisations across the public and voluntary sector.

Contributions to that effort included staff, officials and volunteers from:

ALVO, Create, CVS Hamilton/East Kilbride, SoLVE, Community Links, South Lanarkshire Council, NHS Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire Voluntary TV, SCVO, Scottish Government, Rutherglen Town Hall, Coalburn One Stop Shop, Fairhill Lifestyles Centre, East Kilbride Civic Centre.



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