



CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

London Compact Awards

A speech by Kevin Brennan MP, Minister for the Third Sector at the London Compact Awards at City Hall, 6th November 2008

I am delighted to be here today to celebrate the Compact in London, especially as it is the tenth anniversary of the national Compact this week. The London Compact has also been established now for five years.

Last year the intention to have a London Compact Awards in 2008 was announced and I am very pleased to be here at the inaugural awards ceremony.

Celebrating the Compact

These awards will be a great way to celebrate those who are leading the way in building strong partnerships between government and the third sector in the capital. It's important that we recognise these achievements because working in partnership with charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups leads to better outcomes for the public.

Ten years on we know that the Compact has made a big difference. At the time, it was unique in the world in providing a framework to help government and the third sector to work together. Now government consults the sector in a more

meaningful and effective way, and funding practices have improved, including by promoting longer term grants and contracts.

Yesterday evening I was at the national Compact Awards 2008 reception at No 11. It is right that we should recognise and celebrate excellent partnership working at every level, to help spread good practice.

Compact Debate

It is crucial that the Compact keeps pace with a changing world. Now we need to look forward to the next ten years. As we move into the Compact's second decade, we have much to reflect on and improve.

This summer we asked Sir Bert Massie, the Commissioner for the Compact, to lead a debate on the future of the Compact, a renewed and updated Compact, what this could look like, and whether statutory powers are a mechanism for strengthening it. Compact Week coincides with the close of the debate.

I am grateful to everyone who joined the Commissioner's debate on the Compact's future. I look forward to hearing his formal conclusions from the dialogue with third sector and local government, and views OTS have gathered from government departments and Government Offices for the Regions.

A great deal has been achieved since it was agreed in 1998 but we are now at a watershed moment with the Compact. I am

looking forward to working with Compact Voice, the Commissioner for the Compact, the LGA and colleagues in taking the Compact into the next decade. The challenge ahead is to ensure that it remains a relevant and helpful tool in improving the relationship between government and the third sector.

Local Compacts

If the Compact debate is to have a real impact, Local Compacts must be considered. For example the majority of funding for the sector is local. Need to understand how a review of the national Compact can influence Local Compacts, to achieve a more consistent picture, while taking account of the differences that exist between local areas.

Local Compacts cover all top tier local authority areas, and are framing relationships at the local level, with Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), the new duty to involve, Local Area Agreements, and the Comprehensive Area Assessment. It is clear that Local Compacts are seen as increasingly important by local bodies in involving the sector at the heart of LSPs and LAAs.

Two of the most important indicators for LSPs to consider in terms of the third sector are national indicator 7 'An environment for a thriving third sector' and national indicator 6 'Participation in regular Volunteering'. 62% of LAAs have chosen indicator 6 and/or NI 7. The national survey of third sector organisations, to measure indicator 7, will give us information, of the sort we have never had before, on local issues of direct relevance to the operation of Local Compacts – such as the quality the local funding, of partnerships

working, and or the quality of local consultation and opportunities to influence local decisions.

Way forward

The Compact is the overarching framework that should give shape to and underpin all the work between government, nationally and locally, and the sector. We will need to work together to bring the Compact into its next decade to make it stronger, and better capable of shaping relationships between the third sector and government.

Finally, I would like to thank the London Compact Working Group for organising the event today. They are taking impressive steps towards embedding the principles of the Compact across the public sector in London. And I would like to congratulate the winners for their achievement in Compact ways of working. Before we hear about them, I will hand over to Merrick Cockell, Chairman of the London Councils.

[Ends]