



Argyll and Bute third sector interface

Background

Third sector in Argyll and Bute

Argyll and Bute is one of the most diverse areas in the UK with a mix of community organisations that reflect that diversity. There are active volunteers, numerous community organisations and social enterprises supporting communities and providing essential services.

Many of these organisations evolved from community roots and their history and links are often focused on local areas within Argyll and Bute. Support for third sector organisations has also been delivered on a more local basis with the range of services, access and quality varying according to location.

The major public sector organisations have found the varied scale and scope these local organisations difficult to handle when trying to engage with the third sector. Argyll Voluntary Action, Islay and Jura CVS, Bute Community Links and ABSEN¹ have led the development of the Third Sector Partnership (TSP) as a means to improve joint working and engage more effectively with other partners.

Community Planning in Argyll and Bute

Third sector organisations, usually via the CVSs, ABSEN or volunteer centre, have been involved in the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) from the outset. Whilst a useful contributor to the process, the local bases for the different intermediary organisations left the CPP partners unsure of the status of the different contributions during the early years of the CPP.

The concordat between the Scottish Government and COSLA raised the importance of CPPs as they were charged with developing the Single Outcome Agreement. Whilst the third sector intermediaries were involved in the development of the SOA, all partners felt that the full potential of those links had not been realised.

The CPP partners have a broad view of the third sector – from voluntary organisations through to social enterprises delivering key services (see Appendix). They are keen to support the development of third sector organisations as a means to ensure communities are active and healthy as well as to open up options for future service delivery.

¹ ABSEN – Argyll and Bute Social Enterprise Network

The Community Planning Partnership has defined its key outcomes for the third sector as:

- More active third sector, supporting more community activity
- Better quality support for third sector organisations across the whole of Argyll and Bute
- Equitable access to support for all communities in Argyll and Bute
- A clear voice advocating the interests of the third sector in Argyll and Bute locally and nationally
- Stronger and more active social enterprises winning contracts to provide services

Scottish Government perspective

The Scottish Government wants to see broader activity supporting the national outcomes, including greater involvement in service delivery by the third sector.

The Government is keen to see better coordinated, more efficient support for third sector organisations. In order to facilitate this change the Government suggested the formation of interfaces between third sector and CPPs to enable more effective representation and more efficient management of Government support for the third sector locally.

The suggestion of an interface coincided with the changes that the CPP was looking for locally and subsequent developments have seen a consistent coordinated approach by the CPP partners and Government to develop more effective links between the public sector and the third sector.

The convergence of the different approaches to working with the third sector has been an important factor in the sustained effort by all parties involved to reach agreement on the nature and operation of the third sector interface.

CPP commitment to the third sector

The achievement of the outcomes for the third sector is reliant on effective working relationships between the CPP and the third sector. To that end, the CPP makes the following commitments:

- That all partnerships within the CPP structure have a third sector representative and, if appropriate, additional third sector organisations should be involved
- The nature of the representation will be agreed through dialogue with the Third Sector Partnership
- Services provided by CPP partners to support third sector organisations will work with the third sector providers of support to produce a coordinated programme of activities
- CPP partners will consider social enterprises as potential service providers – subject to proper procurement processes in line with best practice
- To provide support as appropriate to influence national policy and practice with respect to the third sector
- To develop CPP structures and processes to enable effective engagement with communities and third sector organisations

- To acknowledge that the third sector is diverse and that there is no single third sector perspective, but to encourage processes that allow the third sector to have an authoritative voice to communicate that diversity
- To be open in all communications to ensure that there is sufficient time for the TSP to effectively consult with the extensive networks of third sector organisations in Argyll and Bute.

This commitment is recognised at a political level with the Council's appointment of a third sector spokesperson – the first in Scotland.

The Argyll and Bute Third Sector Interface

The Argyll and Bute Third Sector Interface is a combination of the TSP and this commitment from the CPP. The interface describes a set of key relationships that encompass support for the sector and representation at all levels of the CPP.

Remit and scope

The interface is a forum for coordination and planning of support services to the third sector in Argyll and Bute – across all aspects of the third sector from volunteering through to social enterprises delivering services (either independently or contracting for others). In practice this will involve direct links between public, private and national providers with the TSP to produce a coordinated programme of activities. Further details are described in the TSP partnership agreement.

The interface will also be the focus for coordinating and managing representation at all levels of the CPP. If a partnership is seeking third sector or community representation they will liaise with the TSP to identify appropriate arrangements for representation. Representation activities will be funded by the core funding from the Scottish Government to the Third Sector Partnership.

The role of advocate for the Argyll and Bute third sector on a national stage is important and will be coordinated by the Third Sector Partnership and CPP. Representation on specific topics will be agreed so that the most appropriate partner takes a lead with others providing support.

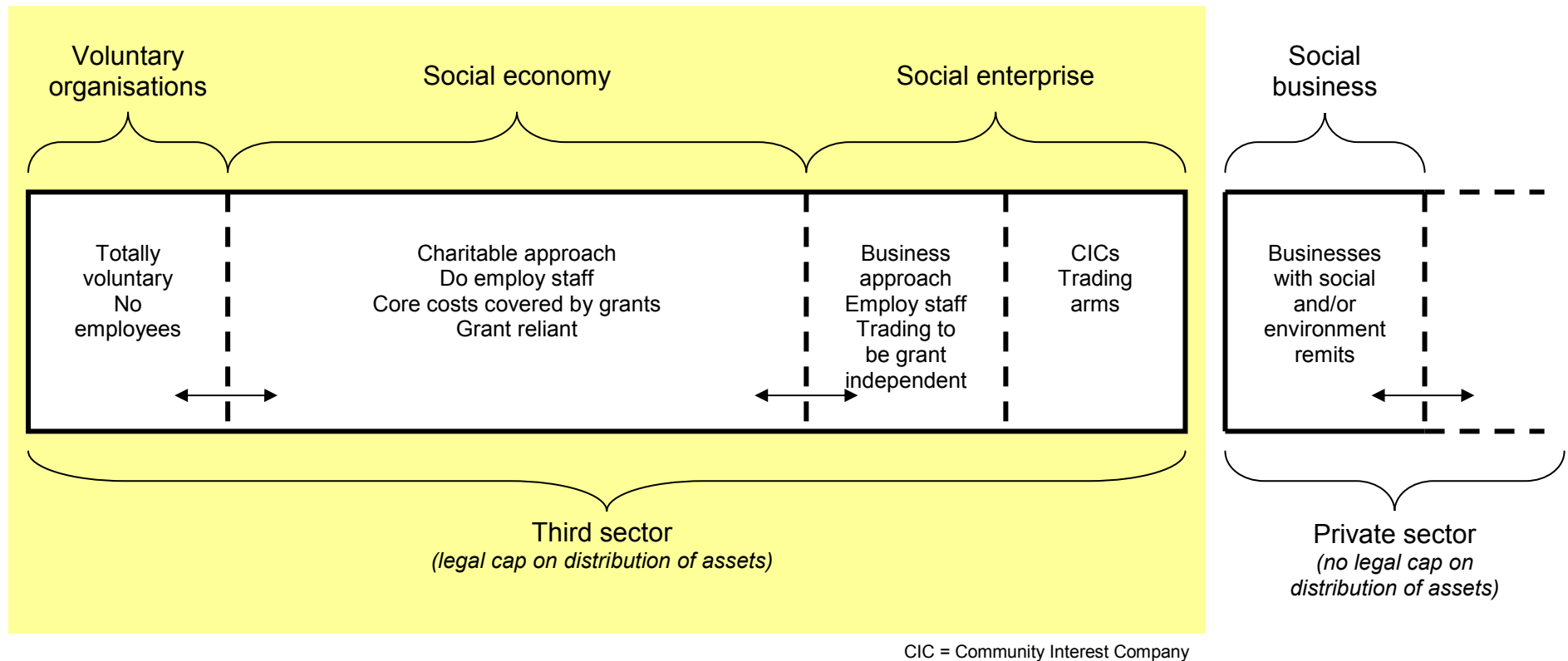
Planning, performance management and risk

The CPP will agree performance management measures with the TSP to populate a scorecard that effectively reports on factors affecting the third sector. This in turn will enable more effective management and so allows more active management.

Plans and performance measures will also take account of the risks in the CPP risk register and other plans and strategies.

Approved by CPP Management Committee
24 March 2010

Appendix 1: The Third Sector landscape



Core model adapted from Colin Campbell – Assist Social Capital and Mike Geraghty – ABSEN