

CYNGOR GWYNEDD - Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Title of Item:	<i>Compact: Cyngor Gwynedd and Third Sector Collaboration Agreement</i>
Cabinet Member:	<i>Cllr Dilwyn Morgan, Cabinet Member for Adults</i>
Relevant officer:	<i>Dylan Owen, Director of Social Services</i>
Date of meeting:	15 September 2026

1. Decision Sought:

- 1.1 Cabinet is asked to approve and adopt the Compact: Cyngor Gwynedd and Third Sector Collaboration Agreement as a strategic framework for the relationship between the Council and Third Sector organisations in Gwynedd.

2. The reason why the Cabinet must make the decision:

- 2.1 The current Compact has been in place since 2008 and was last reviewed in 2013. Since then, the operating context has changed significantly as a result of financial pressures, new legislative expectations, developments in procurement and commissioning, and an increasing emphasis on co-production and social value.
- 2.2 The adoption of a revised Compact provides a clear and consistent basis to guide the relationship between Cyngor Gwynedd and the Third Sector in the future.

3. Background / Introduction

- 3.1 Cyngor Gwynedd and Third Sector have worked in partnership for a number of years to support the county's residents and communities. The Third Sector includes a wide range of charities, voluntary organisations, social enterprises and community groups that make a significant contribution to the wellbeing of the people of Gwynedd and provide services that complement the Council's work.
- 3.2 In December 2022, Audit Wales published a national report, "[A Missed Opportunity - Social Enterprises](#)", reviewing how Welsh local authorities work with social enterprises and the Third Sector. The report concluded that social enterprises make an important contribution to the well-being of communities, but that their potential is not being fully realised by many local authorities. It was noted that there is a lack of coherent strategies, a lack of understanding of the sector, and missed opportunities to

collaborate, commission and procure services in ways that support the development of the sector.

- 3.3 Audit Wales noted that local authorities are in a position to do more to maximise the impact of the Third Sector, deliver better value for money and improve services for people and communities. The report recommended that local authorities develop more strategic arrangements for engagement with the sector, strengthen collaboration across departments, and make better use of commissioning and procurement arrangements to support social enterprises and community organisations.
- 3.4 The report's findings echo the issues raised locally through engagement with Mantell Gwynedd, and sector organisations, namely inconsistency in funding arrangements, lack of corporate co-ordination, and the need to strengthen collaboration and joint planning arrangements. The revised Compact (**appendix 1**) is an opportunity to respond to these challenges by setting clear principles and expectations for the Council's future relationship with the Third Sector.
- 3.5 The arrangements of the Third Sector Liaison Group which were previously facilitated by Cyngor Gwynedd have been paused for a number of months, but new arrangements are planned to be developed that will avoid duplicating existing engagement structures, namely the Gwynedd Third Sector Network facilitated by Mantell Gwynedd. This will strengthen relations with Mantell Gwynedd and ensure collaboration and co-development towards the future.
- 3.6 **Consultation**
 - 3.6.1 The intention of the consultation process was not just to develop a document, but to establish a clear set of principles and expectations to inform the relationship between Cyngor Gwynedd and the Third Sector into the future.
 - 3.6.2 Discussions were held early on with Mantell Gwynedd and Council officers in order to establish the basic principles that should guide the relationship between Cyngor Gwynedd and the Third Sector, back in 2024. These discussions focused on themes such as trust, transparency, communication, collaboration, co-production and consistency in arrangements across the Council.
 - 3.6.3 Following the initial establishment of the principles, a six-week engagement period on the draft Compact took place during October and November 2025. The aim of this period was to test the proposed principles and seek wider views from third sector organisations, stakeholders and individuals. The Compact was also presented to the Gwynedd Third Sector Network, facilitated by Mantell Gwynedd, on 10 October 2025, providing an opportunity for a wide range of organisations to comment on the proposed content and arrangements.

3.6.4 Overall, the response to the draft Compact was positive, with a number of respondents welcoming the intention to establish a clear framework for the relationship between Cyngor Gwynedd and the Third Sector. Some specific comments were noted about the draft including:

- It was suggested that consideration should be given to using a clearer title such as "Partnership Agreement" rather than "Compact".
- Comments were made on the design of the document and diagrams to ensure that they reflect the principle of putting the residents of Gwynedd at the centre of everything.
- It was felt that more detail was needed in some parts of the document in order to explain how the principles would be implemented in practice.
- It was suggested that it should be emphasised that communication is a two-way process, with a responsibility on both sides to listen, share information and collaborate openly.
- The importance of referring to the Welsh Government's Code of Practice for Third Sector Funding was noted and ensuring that the principles of the code are reflected in the Compact.
- A number of editorial and verbal suggestions were received to improve the clarity and accuracy of the document.

3.6.5 The feedback received was used to refine the content of the Compact and ensure that it reflected the needs and priorities of the sector.

3.7 Care Scrutiny Committee

3.7.1 The Compact was considered by the Care Scrutiny Committee on 16 July 2026. There was general support for the intention to renew and strengthen the relationship between Cyngor Gwynedd and the Third Sector and the fact that the Compact updated arrangements that had not been reviewed for over a decade, and reflected the legislative and policy changes since then, was welcomed.

3.7.2 There was a discussion on how the success of the Compact will be measured, the arrangements for sector representation, the role of Mantell Gwynedd and the financial challenges faced by Third Sector organisations. It was explained that the purpose of the Compact is to establish common principles and demonstrate a collective commitment to future collaboration.

3.7.3 An action plan and areas of work will be developed through the arrangements of the revamped Third Sector Liaison Group, with the agenda and discussions informed by the issues and opportunities identified by the sector itself in partnership with the Council.

3.7.4 The Scrutiny Committee's desire to receive a further report on the implementation and impact of the Compact in two years' time was also welcomed.

4. Equality Impact Assessment and Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken as part of the process of developing the Compact. The Council has a duty to consider the impact of its decisions on equality, the Welsh language, community well-being, and the needs of people with protected characteristics, ensuring that no group is disadvantaged as a result of the decision.

4.2 The assessment concluded that the Compact is likely to have a positive impact by strengthening the relationship between the Council and the Third Sector, improving opportunities for engagement and collaboration, and supporting services and activities that contribute to the well-being of communities across Gwynedd.

4.3 The Compact supports the objectives of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 by strengthening collaboration between the Council and the Third Sector for the benefit of Gwynedd's communities. The principles set out in the Compact contribute in particular to creating cohesive communities, improving social well-being, and promoting participation and community involvement.

4.4 In developing the Compact, consideration was given to the five ways of working set out in the Act:

Involvement	The Compact was developed in partnership with Mantell Gwynedd, Third Sector organisations and Council departments. A period of public engagement was undertaken to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to contribute to the content of the document.
Collaboration	A key purpose of the Compact is to strengthen the relationship and collaborative arrangements between Gwynedd Council and the Third Sector.
Prevention	By strengthening communication, collaboration and mutual understanding between partners, the Compact aims to reduce the risk of inconsistency, duplication of effort and lack of coordination in the future.
Long Term	The Compact establishes a long-term framework and set of principles for the relationship between the Council and the Third Sector during a period of financial pressure and increasing demand for services.

Integration	The Compact supports cross-departmental and partnership working, recognising the contribution of the Third Sector to achieving wider well-being objectives across public services and communities in Gwynedd.
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5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Following the adoption of the Compact, the Council will publish the final document and move forward with the arrangements for the re-establishment of the Third Sector Liaison Group. Discussions will continue with Mantell Gwynedd regarding representation on the group to ensure broad and inclusive engagement across the sector, and appropriate governance and monitoring arrangements will be developed to support the implementation of the Compact.

6. Views of the Statutory Officers.

6.1 Chief Finance Officer

I welcome the review of the Compact with the Third Sector. Updating the Compact as a strategic framework for the relationship between the Council and Third Sector organisations in Gwynedd helps to set out the roles in achieving and supporting the Council's objectives, and the re-establishment of the Third Sector Liaison Group will set new momentum.

6.2 Monitoring Officer

The role of the third sector in delivering on and supporting the Council's objectives is clear. The Compact creates a document that supports this partnership and builds an appropriate collaborative working framework to maintain and develop this. I am satisfied with the propriety of the decision sought

List of Appendices:

1. *Compact: Cyngor Gwynedd and Third Sector Collaboration Agreement*
2. *Equality Impact Assessment*