Bristol Compact – revision – what to keep / change / drop for the new Compact?
The Bristol Compact, published in 2012, includes many values, themes and commitments that were related to the relationships between the VCSE and public sectors at that time. Many of those aspects have become embedded (business-as-usual), others are no longer relevant and some are still current.

This document includes detailed commentary from the Bristol Compact Partners' Group and is intended to inform other thinking in the development of the new Compact. The group's recommendations are included, as marked with > in the commentary below.

Bristol Compact 2012 words	Commentary from the Bristol Compact Partners' Group
Bristol Compact	> Consider changing the name to avoid some of the negative connotations of the term 'Compact' and emphasise the need for change, while building on the positive aspects of the term. Our expectations of relationships need to be re-set as effective, two-way and solutions-focussed.
Improving partnerships between Bristol's Public Sector and the Voluntary and Community Sectors	> Change emphasis on effective relationships and principles, away from the concept of good-bad, parent-child relationships, the need for improvement and the notion of arbitration/enforcement. > In general, the new Compact needs to be lighter, flexible and encourage collaborative thinking and problem-solving.
Introduction – what is the Compact? Bristol's thriving Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) contributes many things to the city, including connection with communities, effective and appropriate service design, creation of opportunity for local people through volunteering and training, and attracting significant financial investment in the city. The Bristol Compact is the agreement made between the public sector and the VCS in the city. The Bristol Partnership has adopted the Bristol Compact on behalf of the city and promotes and encourages its implementation. The Compact recognises that positive working relationships are crucial to Bristol and it seeks to define and strengthen the links between the public sector and the VCS – for the benefit of Bristol, its people and communities.	No need to make a case for the value of the VCSE sector (which is agreed) as this reinforces an assumption of judgement and power. > Remove reference to the Bristol Partnership, which is obsolete. > Change this to the 'describes effective relationship – we are all working for the benefit of xyz'. Consider adding reference to the VCSE sector's social value contribution to Bristol.

The national Compact (updated and revised in December 2010), clearly describes the Coalition Government's commitment to positive relationships between the public sector and the VCS. The Compact states that, "An effective partnership between the Government and CSOs* will help achieve the following outcomes: • A strong, diverse and independent civil society • Effective and transparent design and development of policies, programmes and public services • Responsive and high-quality programmes and services • Clear arrangements for managing changes to programmes and services • An equal and fair society"	The 2010 Compact supported the then government's agenda, The Big Society. The prominence of the Compact has diminished since then, with Compact Voice (the umbrella body) losing funding (2015) and being absorbed into NCVO. Civil Society Minister Tracey Crouch MP has not yet commented on the Compact since being appointed in June 2017. Office for Civil Society has a Public Services Programme (including social value and projects to support smaller VCS organisations in commissioning), demonstrating political commitment to Compact-related work. > Include a link to the National Compact; delete these words.
The national Compact uses the terms 'civil society' and 'civil society organisations' to describe the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and VCS organisations.	Terms describing the sector are still ambiguous. In recent years, there have been significant changes to legal forms and associations have added to the sector. > Refer to VCSE Strategy development, which includes definition of the sector; include importance of social impact/outcomes.
Our commitments This revised version of the Bristol Compact complements and builds on the national Compact and the strong implementation of the Compact in the city. It includes elements of the national Compact that are most relevant to Bristol. It clarifies and restates the importance of our shared commitments, public sector commitments and VCS commitments. The purpose of including commitments is to enable a constructive dialogue in our relationships.	The principle of shared commitments to effective relationships is good. It may be true that there has been more focus on public sector commitments than others. > Remove explicit reference to commitments and re-frame as implicit in effective relationships. As public sector changes, there has been more recent emphasis on the growing relationships between larger (e.g. prime contractors) and smaller organisations.

	> The new Compact needs to address these inter-organisational relationships. > Refer to VCSE Strategy development.
Compact Partners' Group The Compact Partners' Group is the multi-agency group responsible for leading on the implementation, monitoring and championing of the Bristol Compact. The Group's members include representation from Bristol's public sector and VCS. Full details of the Group's membership and a record of its work can be seen at www.bristolcompact.org.uk/compact-partners-group	In recent years, the Compact Partners' Group activity has focused on local authority work. Although other public sector bodies have interest, there has been no clear programme or focus. The group has not been linked into governance structures and its purpose has not been clear. > Is there a need for the new Compact to be linked into and report to formal governance structures? Whatever the links, all public sector in/around Bristol needs to be included. > If such structure is needed, could operational and strategic overviews be integrated into existing structures (rather than creating new one)? > Could Compact governance be linked to the governance of the new VCSE Strategy and/or the Social Value Advisory Group?
Compact values The Bristol Compact has been developed and implemented jointly by public sector and VCS partners and is underpinned by a set of shared values: • That everything we do as partners is done for the benefit of Bristol, its people and communities. • That we share a commitment to maintaining and developing a thriving and sustainable VCS in Bristol. • That we recognise and celebrate diversity and the things we have in common. • That we recognise that we are dependent on each other and work together for mutual benefit. • That we share a commitment to vision and development of Bristol, as currently described	Such values (or similar) will likely be included in the new VCSE Strategy. These could be turned into principles in the new Compact, for example: > Keep (in Compact or VCSE Strategy). > Keep (in Compact or VCSE Strategy). > Keep (in Compact or VCSE Strategy); add 'sector diversity'. > Change notion of dependency to importance for Bristol. > Remove, will be referenced in VCSE Strategy.

in the Bristol 20:20 Plan*.	
• That we have to work within available resources that are linked to the city's current priorities, which are established in consultation with the VCS.	> Remove, as this is implicit.
• That we ensure that the partnerships that serve the city are as effective as possible.	> Remove, as this is implicit.
• That our partnership work is made effective by openness, respect, accountability, integrity, objectivity, honesty, leadership and putting Bristol and its people and communities first. *Bristol's 20:20 Plan: www.bristolpartnership.org/vision-for-bristol*	> Change in new principles, including these emerging ideas • Good communication • Solutions focus • Proportionality • Aspiration • Effectiveness • Productivity • Collaboration • Realism.
Compact themes The Compact Partners' Group recognises the following themes as especially relevant to Bristol and endorses their implementation through shared commitments, public sector commitments and VCS commitments as described below.	The 5 themes established in 2012 were informed by current matters in Bristol and the 2010 National Compact. Many commitments under the themes have become business-as-usual (BAU); others are no longer relevant/appropriate. > In general, the new Compact needs to be lighter, flexible and encourage collaborative thinking and problem-solving.
1. Allocating resources efficiently	> Keep; remove 'efficiently'
Shared commitments **1.1.** Integrate the principles of intelligent commissioning[*1] and social value[*2] into all commissioning process and policy.	All commissioning is in the context of the UK's Public Contract Regulations 2015 (PCR2015). > Define principles, which are important and provide guidance for practice and relationships.
1.2. Agree how outcomes, including the social, environmental or economic value, will be designed and monitored before financial arrangements[*3] are made.	> Remove, as this is implicit in business-as-usual (outcomes based commissioning and BCC's Social Value Policy, for example).

1.3. Work together to design funding/investment/commissioning opportunities so that resources are used effectively and value for money is achieved.	> Remove, as this is implicit in business-as-usual (commissioning practices, procurement methods).
1.4. Apply full cost recovery, which means that VCS organisations can operate in the same way as organisations from other sectors, by including relevant overhead and management costs in financial arrangements and holding reserves(to meet their legal obligations).	> Remove, as this is implicit in business-as-usual. > There may be a need to describe reasonable levels of FCR.
1.5. Review the efficiency of all stages of the commissioning process. *1 Audit Commission's report 'Hearts and Minds: commissioning from the voluntary sector' (2007)* *2 According to the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012* *3 The term 'financial arrangements' refers to funding and commissioning opportunities, including innovation grants, competitive grants, contracts.*	Different practices across public sector of evaluating effectiveness. > Re-focus this in to VCSE sector involvement in system learning.
Public sector commitments **1.6.** Put in place multi-year funding arrangements, aiming for three-year arrangements as standard.	Different practices across public sector (longer contracts commonly in place; some of shorter duration). > Change to include notions of appropriateness, organisational sustainability and stability/continuity for service users.
1.7. Follow realistic time-tables to ensure that financial arrangements allow for the distribution of information.	Procurement timescales set by PCR2015; Commissioning timescales vary. > Keep, with revision (add time for collaboration; balance with rapid pace of public sector changes).
1.8. Choose the most appropriate mechanism (for example, innovation grants, competitive grants, contracts), according to commissioners' analysis of the provider market.	> Keep, with revision (include new methods enabled by PCR2015; keep market analysis).
1.9. Coordinate funding streams and monitoring processes through joint commissioning and lead funder arrangements.	Not clear if this is still appropriate or how it is used in practice.
1.10. Balance the needs for accountability and value for money with a commitment to proportionate and effective processes that monitor and evaluate	> Keep the notion of proportionality; add reference to practice within relationships between primes and subcontracting VCSE

outcomes.	organisations.
1.11. Support the VCS in ways other than funding for example, community asset transfer and capacity building support).	> Remove, as could be better included in the new VCSE Strategy.
1.12. Publish in advance information about financial arrangements and opportunities.	Inconsistent practice. > Keep and find a solution.
1.13. Recognise that payment in advance of expenditure enables more VCS organisations to engage in financial arrangements and opportunities and sustainable service delivery.	Inconsistent practice. > Keep and find a solution.
1.14. Consider the size and diversity of the local provider market in designing the procurement options and contractual arrangements in commissioning processes.	Market analyses not consistently undertaken. > Keep and find a solution.
1.15. Assess the implications for the VCS of new policies, legislation and guidance, and aim to reduce the bureaucratic burden, particularly on small organisations.	The inclusion of smaller organisations is important. > Keep and possibly expand with practicalities.
VCS commitments **1.16.** Respond constructively to funding opportunities.	Implicit but inconsistent. > keep with revision (adding positive, constructive, solutions-focused).
1.17. Respond constructively to advance information about financial arrangements and opportunities by engaging with service users and governance bodies.	> Remove, as this is implicit in business-as-usual.
1.18. Be open and transparent about reporting, recognising that monitoring is an aspect of good management practice and a reasonable expectation of distributors of funds.	> Remove, as this is implicit in business-as-usual.
1.19. Facilitate feedback from users and communities to help improve delivery of programmes and services and ensure that consultation responses accurately reflect the views and experiences of users/communities.	> Remove, as this is implicit in business-as-usual.
1.20. Recognise that public funders can reasonably expect VCS organisations to acknowledge sources of funds (for example, in publicity materials).	> Remove, as this is implicit in business-as-usual.
2. Promoting equality, community cohesion and social inclusion	Not clear if this is still appropriate or how it is used in practice.

Shared commitments **2.1.** Understand the specific needs of under-represented and disadvantaged groups by actively seeking the views of service users and clients. Take these views into account, including assessing impact, when designing and implementing policies, programmes and services.	> Remove, as no longer clear what it means.
2.2. Actively promote good relations between diverse VCS organisations and between the VCS and public agencies by communicating clearly and developing and supporting opportunities for collaboration and partnership working.	> Change, with emphasis on collaboration, including smaller/equalities organisations.
2.3. Take practical action to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality and to ensure a voice for underrepresented and disadvantaged groups.	> Remove, as this is implicit in business-as-usual.
Public sector commitments **2.4.** Work with VCS organisations that represent, support or provide services to people specifically protected by legislation and other under-represented and disadvantaged groups.	> Keep, with emphasis on positive action to include smaller/equalities organisations. > Refer to Voice & Influence consultation for current BCC thinking.
2.5. Acknowledge that organisations representing specific disadvantaged or under-represented groups can help promote social and community cohesion and should have fair access to public funding.	> Remove, as no longer clear what it means.
VCS commitments **2.6.** Demonstrate how the value of the work can help the funding body deliver its public sector duties on promoting equality and tackling discrimination.	> Remove, as this is implicit in business-as-usual.
3. Consulting with and involving the VCS, service users and governance bodies	> Keep, with revision.
Shared commitments **3.1.** Clearly explain the purpose of each consultation exercise, describing who to talk to and why and ensure appropriate and accessible communication with the target group.	Engaging and consulting are business-as-usual. > Could expand with 'establish appropriate form of consultation/engagement from the outset'.
3.2. Be clear about what can and cannot change in each consultation process (for example, policy, service or outcome).	> Keep.
3.3. Allow sufficient time (12 weeks) for responses to written consultations and avoid holding consultations over extended holiday periods.	Changes to public sector funding/structure have affected capacity to hold 12-week consultations. Some assumptions behind 12 weeks could be challenged. Some key principles (e.g. access) must be retained. There are some views that a static consultation limits

	dialogue and collaborative/responsive development of ideas. > Keep, with revision (flexibility; appropriateness; collaborative dialogue; commitment to access).
3.4. Use a variety of quality and accessible approaches (for example, events, written communications, online) depending on the consultation target group and understandings of how best to engage with them.	> Keep.
3.5. Provide reasonable expenses (for example, for access costs, travel, childcare, personal assistance) so that diverse involvement of service users is encouraged.	> Remove, as no longer possible.
3.6. Publish feedback after consultations to describe views and themes and actions arising from them (for example, on Bristol City Council's Consultation Finder).	> Remove, as this is implicit in business-as-usual.
3.7. Find out what is already known about people and communities so that duplication is avoided.	> Remove, as no longer clear what it means.
3.8. Provide advance notice and promotion of consultations.	> Keep, especially as this is a mitigation of potentially shorted consultation periods.
Public sector commitments **3.9.** Recognise that VCS organisations are connected with people and communities and that those relationships can help make consultation more thorough and effective.	> Remove, as this is implicit in business-as-usual.
3.10. Facilitate appropriate involvement of the VCS in all key stages of the commissioning process.	> Remove, as no longer clear what it means.
VCS commitments **3.11.** Facilitate feedback from users and communities to the public sector to help improve delivery of programmes and services.	> Remove, as this is implicit in business-as-usual.
3.12. Recognise that consultations are opportunities to input the perspectives of VCS to influence policy, strategy and practice.	> Remove, as this is implicit in business-as-usual.
3.13. Seek the views of service users, clients, carers, beneficiaries, members, volunteers, and trustees when making representations. Be clear on who is being represented, in what capacity, and on what basis that representation is being made.	> Remove, as this is implicit in business-as-usual.
4. Promoting and supporting volunteering	> Keep, with revision.
Volunteering involves spending unpaid time on an activity that aims to benefit the community. People volunteer for many different reasons, including: to develop skills or gain experience, to socialise or to give something back to society in general and their local community.	> Keep.

<u>Shared commitments</u> **4.1.** Recognise that volunteering is a choice freely made by each individual.	> Change to a value/principle.
4.2. Recognise that volunteering should be open to all.	> Change to a value/principle.
4.3. Recognise that giving time voluntarily establishes a reciprocal relationship in which the volunteer also benefits.	> Remove, as this is implicit in business-as-usual.
4.4. Recognise the contribution volunteers make to organisations, the community, the social economy and wider social objectives.	> Remove, as could be better included in the new VCSE Strategy.
4.5. Include the cost and value of volunteer contributions in proposals and reporting.	> Keep.
4.6. Recognise that volunteers are not substitutes or replacements for paid employees.	> Refer to Mayor's statement and the CCG's STP.
4.7. Manage volunteers respectfully and professionally, including through support, management and training of volunteers and volunteer managers, and payment of out-of-pocket expenses.	> Keep, with emphasis on the importance of quality and safeguarding.
5. Managing changes to services	> Keep, with revision.
<u>Shared commitments</u> **5.1.** Recognise that it may be necessary to end or change funding arrangements (for example, when people or communities' needs change; when funding streams cease).	Business-as-usual (contractual terms; decommissioning policy). > Change to collaborative working to find solutions.
5.2. Work together to ensure that the impact of any changes on service users and employees is considered before deciding to end or change funding.	Business-as-usual (contractual terms; decommissioning policy). > Keep, with emphasis on the need for standard approach.
5.3. Work together to ensure that any changes are implemented respectfully and legally and negative impact on service users and employees minimised.	> Keep.
<u>Public sector commitments</u> **5.4.** If a programme or service is encountering problems, discuss and agree with the service provider a timetable of actions to improve performance before making a decision to end a financial relationship.	Business-as-usual (contractual terms; decommissioning policy). > Change to collaborative working to find solutions.
5.5. Give a minimum of three months' notice in writing when changing or ending a funding relationship or other support, apart from in exceptional circumstances (for example, a serious breach of funding conditions). Provide a clear rationale for why the decision has been taken and details of any appeal process.	Some inconsistent practice. > Keep, with emphasis on contractual terms, decommissioning policy, best value statutory guidance.

5.6. Where there are restrictions or changes to future resources, discuss with VCS organisations the potential implications as early as possible, give organisations the opportunity to respond, and consider the response fully, respecting sector expertise, before making a final decision.	BAU (effective contract management).
VCS commitments **5.7.** Contribute positively to reviews of services.	> Remove, as this is implicit in business-as-usual.
5.8. Advise funders on the social, environmental or economic impact of funding changes, and on ways to minimise their effects on people invulnerable situations.	> Remove, as this is implicit in business-as-usual.
Resolving Complaints Bristol Compact policy is to resolve disputes about Compact compliance at early stages. This is an acknowledgement that disputes can be damaging to relationships and can result in wasted resources. In some circumstances disputes may not be resolved in a timely and satisfactory way and may be processed using the Compact Complaints Procedure. Full details of the Compact Complaints Procedure can be seen at www.bristolcompact.org.uk	'Compliance' has not been an emphasis of Compact Liaison work; instead, more proactive and problem-solving approach has been adopted. There are many instances of effective relationship management, which are under the radar. There are many cases of early resolution of disputes, with brokerage by Voscur and some cases of late-stage solutions brokered by Voscur (e.g. BCC-Next Link[1]). > Keep – the Compact is useful in resolving difficulties. Change to include empowered, collaborative, timely problem-solving.
The Bristol Compact and you The Compact is relevant to all VCS groups – large or small – and public sector organisations and is our shared responsibility. Its successful implementation depends on those in the public sector and the VCS. The Compact Partners' Group oversees the implementation and monitoring of the Compact in Bristol.	> Change this to include all relationships covered by the new Compact.

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[1] http://www.compactvoice.org.uk/blogs/compact-voice/2016/03/22/talking-vs-litigation-compact-brokerage-predicted-save-%C2%A3500000-public