

EAST AYRSHIRE

COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP BOARD: 18 MARCH 2010

THIRD SECTOR INTERFACE

**Report by the Depute Chief Executive / Executive Director of Corporate Support
East Ayrshire Council**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present to the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board for consideration the structure proposed by Voluntary Sector representatives in respect of the new Third Sector Interface, together with recommendations made in this regard by the Joint Officers' Group (JOG) at its meeting of 23 February 2010.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council for Voluntary Organisations (CVO) East Ayrshire, the Volunteer Centre and the Local Social Economy Partnership (LSEP), supported by officers from Community Learning and Development and the Community Planning and Partnership Unit, are currently working to develop a robust Third Sector Interface, which will allow the Third Sector to:

- operate at a more strategic level, ensuring appropriate representation in Community Planning and other strategic agendas;
- effectively inform policy making and decision making across the Partner agencies, in addition to the planning and delivery of local services;
- further inform the ongoing development of the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) and develop its contribution to achieving SOA outcomes; and
- articulate what is needed by the voluntary sector and the communities it serves.

- 2.2 In addition, the Interface will provide a robust mechanism to support the Third Sector in relation to funding, strategic commissioning and procurement, and monitoring, reporting and evaluation.

- 2.3 Current Scottish Government funding arrangements for CVOs and the Volunteer Centre networks will cease from March 2011 to be replaced by a single pot of funding for each Community Planning Partnership area and it is expected that local arrangements in respect of the Interface will be agreed by the voluntary sector and Community Planning Partnerships, which can be piloted and refined during 2010/11, for implementation from 1 April 2011..

3. PROPOSED MODEL

- 3.1 A proposed model, as detailed in the report at Appendix 1, was submitted to the JOG by the Third Sector Interface Steering Group at its meeting of 23 February 2010 for consideration and recommendation to the Community Planning Partnership Board, subject to review and revision as appropriate during the pilot year.

3.2 While the JOG accepted the model in principle, members had a number of reservations and would recommend that further work is done to ensure that the model is 'fit for purpose' and endorsement by the CPP Board. Specifically, it will require to demonstrate:

- clarity of purpose in respect of the role of the Interface in line with 2.1 above, with a remit distinct from the current roles of the CVO and the Volunteer Centre;
- broader engagement of the voluntary sector is required in the Interface particularly from large national voluntary sector organisations which are active within East Ayrshire; and
- continued support to the Steering Group from Community Learning and Development will be required to ensure the effective development of the model during the pilot year.

3.3 In addition, although this is for the organisations to decide, the JOG was of the view that the merger of the CVO and Volunteer Centre, currently being considered, should be encouraged and recommended as a robust way forward by the CPP Board.

3.4 The JOG is of the view that, until the CPP Board can be satisfied that the Interface is representative of the voluntary sector in East Ayrshire in its widest sense, including large voluntary organisations active locally and social enterprises, it would not be appropriate for it to be represented on the Board at this time.

4. RECOMMENDATION

4.1 The Community Planning Partnership Board is requested to:

- i) acknowledge the work of the Steering Group to date and agree the model in principle as a basis for piloting the Third Sector Interface;
- ii) consider the issues raised at 3.2 above and agree that continued support requires to be given to the Steering Group to ensure that they are addressed;
- iii) agree to accept a further report at a later date highlighting developments in respect of the Interface;
- iv) endorse the view that, at its current stage of development it would not be appropriate for the Third Sector Interface to be represented on the CPP Board, at this time; and
- v) otherwise, note the content of the report.

Elizabeth Morton
Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support
East Ayrshire Council
3 March 2010

EAST AYRSHIRE

COMMUNITY PLANNING JOINT OFFICERS' GROUP: 23 FEBRUARY 2010

THIRD SECTOR INTERFACE

Report by the Third Sector Interface Steering Group**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide an update summary of information to Community Planning Partners on the outcome of a recent consultation exercise within the Third Sector.
- 1.2 To propose a model that would act as a voluntary sector interface with the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and also encourage greater involvement of the voluntary sector with the East Ayrshire Single Outcome Agreement (SOA).
- 1.3 This report concentrates on the function of connection between the CPP and the third sector.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council of Voluntary Organisations (East Ayrshire) Ltd, the Local Social Economy Partnership and the Volunteer Centre East Ayrshire worked together with the Third Sector Interface Steering Group to plan how to involve voluntary groups in the design of an interface between the Third Sector and the Community Planning Partnership in East Ayrshire.
- 2.2 The Steering Group includes voluntary sector members drawn from a wide range of organisations in terms of size, geographical location and field of operation.

3. CONSULTATION

- 3.1 The consultation was carried out in line with the National Standards for Community Engagement and took the form of a postal survey, an online survey and a series of meetings.
- 3.2 Over 400 groups, contact details for which had been gathered from public sources, were invited to take part in the consultation. The initial posting included information about the purpose of the proposed Third Sector Interface. A total of 81 groups responded by either attending a meeting or replying to the survey through a Freepost response envelope.
- 3.3 The survey focused on the groups themselves; size, area of interest and what they felt would help their groups to flourish.
- 3.4 In the second phase, a series of meetings was designed to raise awareness of the function of the Third Sector Interface. These also dealt in more depth with the SOA, and the current and potential involvement of the voluntary sector in the SOA.
- 3.5 Comments and feed back from the consultation were considered by the Third Sector Interface Steering Group. Following discussion with Dot Grieve of Community Learning and Development, East Ayrshire Council, it was decided to have further consultation specifically on the structure of the Third Sector Interface.

- 3.6 In December 2009, groups were given advance notice that consultation events would take place in January 2010. Then, in January 2010, invitations were issued to over 400 groups to attend one of two consultation events. Also distributed was a Background Report to the establishment of the Third Sector Interface, including information on the roles of the Interface as designed by the Scottish Government. The pack also included a copy of some of the most popular Interface structures in use in Scotland, attached at Appendix 1; these would be used as a basis for consultation.
- 3.7 The results of the consultation were used to inform the development of the structure and procedures of the new interface body – the Third Sector Forum East Ayrshire.
- 3.8 Attached at Appendix 2 are details of the membership of the Third Sector Interface Steering Group, the dates and methods of engagement and feedback from consultation.

4. **THIRD SECTOR INTERFACE EAST AYRSHIRE**

- 4.1 The Third Sector Interface will try to ensure that groups in East Ayrshire are as fully involved in the Community Plan and the Single Outcome Agreement as possible.
- 4.2 The Third Sector Interface will benefit from existing networks of groups in East Ayrshire and will be supported by the CVO (EA), the Local Social Economy Partnership and the Volunteer Centre East Ayrshire. It will not seek to replace any existing networks.

Proposed Structure

- 4.3 Detailed below is the proposed structure for the pilot year, although it is recognised that changes may be made based on experience. A review will take place in early 2011 involving all stakeholders.

Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership will be open to all voluntary sector groups – local and national • Target membership will be 100 in the first year of operation
Third Sector Interface East Ayrshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the pilot year, this will be a close, formal partnership of the Volunteer Centre and the Council of Voluntary Organisations, supported by the Local Social Economy Partnership • The Trustees of the Council of Voluntary Organisation and the Volunteer Centre are currently negotiating a partnership – this may progress to a single organisation • The relationship of the LSEP has still to be explored • A joint work plan will be developed to cover all the functions of the Third Sector Interface which are required by the Scottish Government

<p>Representation to Community Planning Partnership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In pilot year only the representative may come from the Steering Group. • In subsequent years, the full network of member organisations will elect a representative(s) to sit on the Community Planning Partnership • Voting will be on the basis of one group, one vote • Term of office is still to be determined • The representative will report back to member organisations through the communication structure • There will be a two-way communication process • The Third Sector Interface will seek a meeting with the CPP to discuss the number and nature of representatives attending the CPP meetings
<p>Broad Network (membership)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement in the broad network can be at the level the group chooses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Receive information only – Contribute to discussions, surveys, consultations – Initiate areas of work. • Involvement can be by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Attending meetings – Through internet or by post – Other means. • Areas of Interest have still to be refined. They will include the themed groups used by the Community Planning Partnership, namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Promoting Lifelong Learning – Delivering Community Regeneration – Improving Community Safety – Improving Health and Wellbeing. • Additional areas may include topics related to the other functions of the Interface, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Volunteering Issues – Building the capacity of the organisation – Social Enterprise. <p>Members of the Broad Network will choose their areas of interest, only receiving information on particular subject areas; for example a playgroup may have an interest in issues regarding funding and protection of children but not have an interest in issues which concern older people.</p>

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 The Joint Officers' Group is requested to:

- i) consider the proposed structure of the Third Sector Interface and recommend endorsement to the Community Planning Partnership Board, subject to review and revision as appropriate during the pilot year; and
- ii) otherwise note the content of the report.

**Third Sector Interface Steering Group
12 February 2010**



THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR AND COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

MODELS OF REPRESENTATION AND “INTERFACES”

Rationale

In considering the form of the new interface, it should be clear that it is for the Community Planning Partners and the Interface to agree the arrangements together. The Scottish Government will not be the arbiter on responsibilities nor distribution of funds; these will be matters for partnership agreement with the Community Planning Partners. However, while the interface is to be developed very much locally, to meet local needs and arrangements, our funding will require that the interfaces meet a minimum set of functions, likely to be:

- Support to voluntary organisations operating in the area, both local organisations and those national organisations that deliver services at the local level
- Support to and promotion of volunteering
- Support and development of social enterprise
- Connection between the Community Planning Partners and the third sector

In practice, this should be no different to the existing range of functions delivered under the “Thrive and Connect” plan for Council of Voluntary Organisations (CVO’s), and the current work of Volunteers Centres (VC’s) and Local Social Enterprise Partnerships (LSEP’s), but with a stronger focus on the single outcome agreement as the key document for the Community Planning Partners area.

The goal of LSEPs has been to support the growth of an enterprising third sector by improving co-ordination and networking, strengthening locally available support and unlocking market opportunities. At present LSEPs often work separately from CVOs and VCs. Their funding has previously been awarded through a bidding process. However, the ethos of localism demanded that decisions about such matters be taken at local level. It was recently agreed that the LSEP funding allocated to East Ayrshire should be drawn down into the CVO bank account. It is anticipated that any decisions on the allocation of this funding will continue to be taken by the LSEP which is currently chaired by East Ayrshire Council.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a brief outline on some of the different models currently being used to involve the voluntary sector in Community Planning structures.

It should be noted that each broad model has in itself a number of variants which should be considered once the broad approach has been agreed.

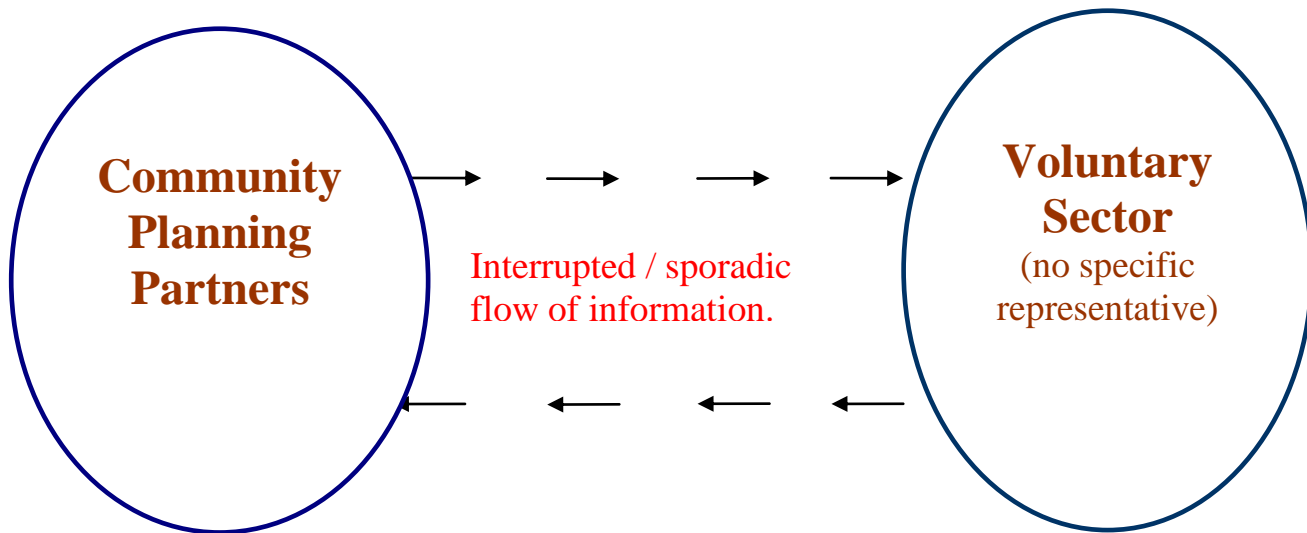
It should also be pointed out that while the structure of the model is subject to debate the legal structure of the two main participants in the interface, namely the CVO and the VC, is an internal matter which is currently subject to discussion by both Boards.

There are four prevalent models currently in use in Scotland.

Model A

Ad-hoc approach

This is the approach that has often been taken to date. In the absence of a clear structure in the voluntary sector, public agencies keen to have voluntary sector involvement in their discussions have invited local organisations to take part in community planning.



STRENGTHS

- Low costs are generally associated with an ad-hoc structure.

Weaknesses

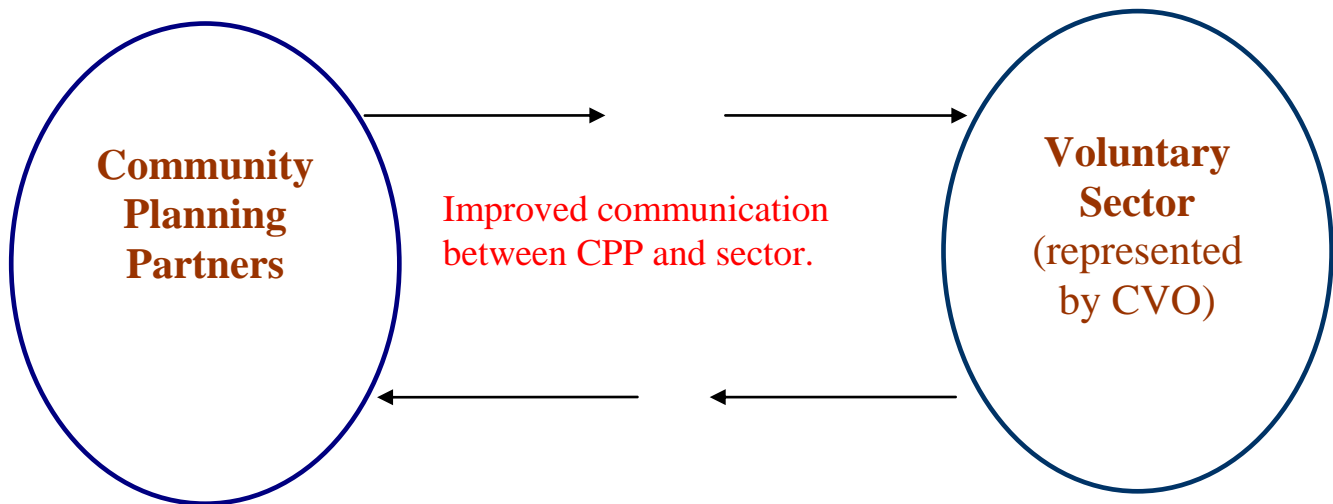
- Invitation to participate is within the gift of the Community Planning Partners.
- Where costs occur they will normally be allocated to the participating organisation. There may well be a high "time cost" associated with participation. This may have a significant impact on the organisation and may very well prove to be a barrier to participation.
- There may be little or not connection between the participating organisation and the wider voluntary sector.
- The opinions and views of the participating organisation may not reflect those held by the wider voluntary sector.
- Opinion / input from participating organisation may be ignored / undervalued if there is no consensus from the wider voluntary sector.

The development of local interfaces has seen a general move away from the ad-hoc approach to engagement between the voluntary sector and Community Planning partners.

Model B

CVO Representation

Public sector partners acknowledge the CVO as being the key conduit for the voluntary sector and include them in Community Planning Partnerships.



Strengths

- Low costs associated with this model.
- CVO is likely to be well connected to the voluntary sector leading to improved communication between the sector and community planning partners.

Weakness

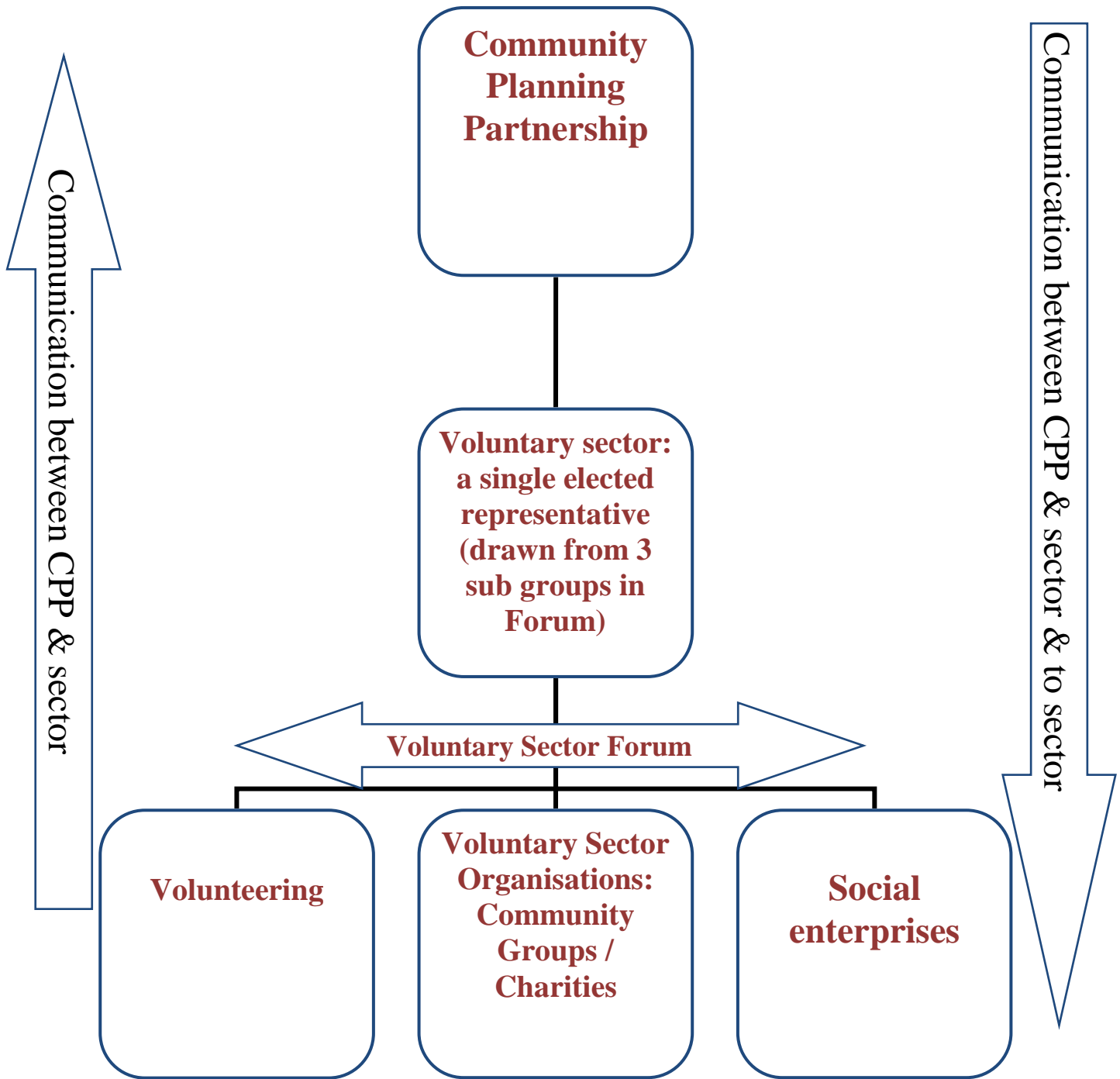
- While the CVO may provide wider representation from across the sector some organisations may not be able to access the process through this channel.

As with Model A the development of local interfaces has seen a general move away from this model. In some areas the CVO has been elected by the interface as the representative for the voluntary sector on the Community Planning Partnership.

Model C

Voluntary Sector Forum

A voluntary sector forum creates a simple structure that enables voluntary sector discussions to take place and representatives to be informed of the views of the sector. It can also provide a key communication channel for information on Community Planning activities.



Variables

The following points may be considered as either a weakness or strength of this model, much will depend on local circumstance and the use of existing resources.

- Frequency of meetings: the number of meetings may have to increase to ensure that all the organisations wishing to participate in the forums have an opportunity to engage with the process.
- This may be mitigated by effective and efficient use of other communication aids such as newsletters or online forums.
- Representation: how will the representative to the Community Planning Partnership be elected? Will the representative have a seat on the Community Planning Board? Will the process ensure wide representation from the sector or is this model only an enhancement of models A & B.

Strengths

- Clear alignment of voluntary and public service delivery / strategy.
- One central point for all involvement.
- Specialist knowledge and general views combined.

Weaknesses

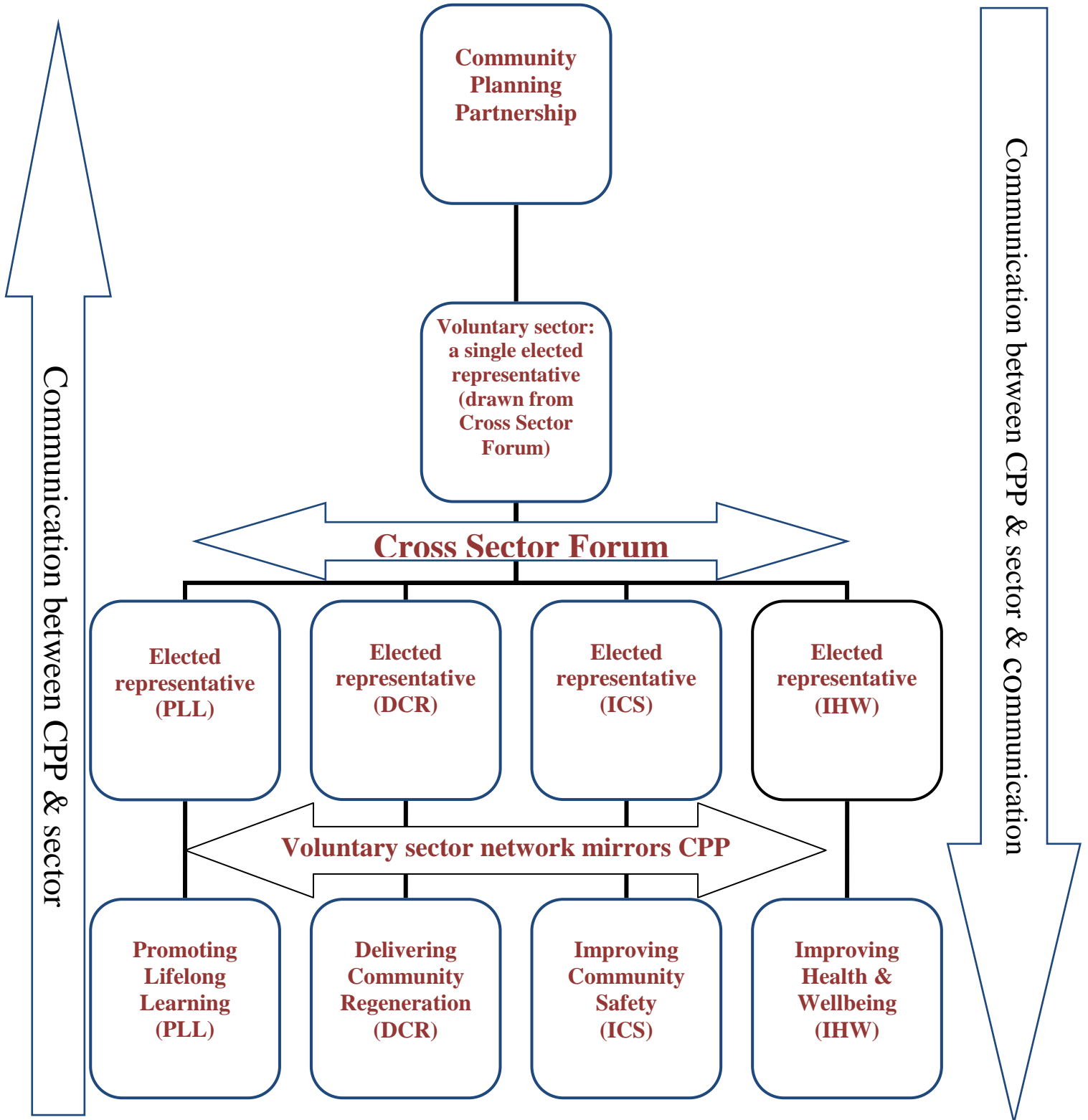
- Discussion requires to be very strategic.
- Difficult for every issue to be discussed.
- Potential frustration with the process from voluntary organisations particularly if communication is not effective and timely.
- There may be cost implications associated with this model, these are most likely to be “time” costs the level of which will be dependent on the frequency of meetings and administration time allocated to use of other communication aids.

Model D

The Mirror

This model is probably the most comprehensive in its approach and is to an extent an extension of Model C. The Model reflects the different strands within the local Community Planning structure and creates a “mirror” sub-group. Membership for each sub-group is drawn from different voluntary sector organisations working broadly across the different strands of the Community Planning process.

Within East Ayrshire there are four strands within the Community Plan.



Variables

As with Model C there are a number of variables which need to be considered.

The following points may be considered as either a weakness or strength of this model, much will depend on local circumstance and the use of existing resources.

- Frequency of meetings; the number of meetings may have to increase to ensure that all the organisations wishing to participate in the forums has an opportunity to engage with the process.
- This may be mitigated by effective and efficient use of other communication aids such as newsletters or online forums.

Strengths

- Clear alignment of voluntary and public service delivery and strategy.
- Organisations can identify areas of relevance and align themselves with the appropriate strand / sub-group.
- Provides organisations with the opportunity and means to address / raise specific issues.
- Representative to Community Planning Partnership elected from cross sector forum ensuring wider representation from sector.
- Provides means of engagement not only between voluntary sector and Community Planning partnership but across the sector.
- Establishment of sub-groups provides networking opportunities across the wider voluntary sector.

Weaknesses

- Requires time commitment to establish sub-groups and support initial engagement.
- May be regarded as bureaucratic.
- How will representative be elected from cross sector forum?

NOTES FOR CONSIDERATION / COMMENT

The model chosen is not set in stone and should be flexible enough to adapt to the changing needs of the sector.

How do we gather information in?

How will information be communicated / disseminated across sector?

Where and when will meetings be held?

Format of meetings?

Responsibility for organising meetings / communication of information.

CLARITY AROUND THE TWO FUNCTIONS OF THE INTERFACE

- 1) Service delivery and funding of the CVO, VC & LSEP as delivery agents.
- 2) Engagement with CPP.

THIRD SECTOR INTERFACE STEERING GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Name	Organisation	Comment
Alice McArdle	Volunteer Centre East Ayrshire	
Fiona Skilling	Council of Voluntary Organisations (East Ayrshire) Ltd	
Brian Broadley	Council of Voluntary Organisations (East Ayrshire) Ltd	
Jane Overton	Cumnock Credit Union	
Irene Clark	Advocacy Service East Ayrshire	
Antonio Coccozza	Hansel Village	
John Spooner	Local Social Economy Partnership (E A C)	
Donald Stewart	Ayr United Boys Football Club	
Janice Hendry	Yipworld.com	New
Rosalie McCluskey	Drongan Health Initiative	
Jim Murdoch	CLAD, East Ayrshire Council	Support

CONSULTATION DETAILS

Date	Engagement	Number Groups	
28 January 2010	Consultation Event – Shortlees Community Centre	Issued:	17
27 January 2010	Consultation Event - Netherthird	400	14
January 2010	Written response to consultation papers		4
July 2009	Awareness Meeting - Muirkirk IFE Wing		Issued:
July 2009	Awareness Meeting - Dalmellington Centre	412	0
July 2009	Awareness Meeting - Cumnock Town Hall		12
July 2009	Awareness Meeting - Morton Hall, Newmilns		10
July 2009	Awareness Meeting - Kay Park Bowling Club		12
July 2009	Awareness Meeting - Patna Day Centre		0
July 2009	Awareness Meeting - Stewarton Area Centre		0
July 2009	Awareness Meeting - N W Community Centre		28
July – Sept 2009	Postal Survey – size and needs of Third Sector		Issued
		412	81

FEEDBACK FROM CONSULTATION

Some of the strongest points from consultation events;

- Need a nice simple structure
- Who would decide what theme group your group was put into? The criteria for each sub-group should be clear – some groups may want to belong to more than 1 sub-group
- We want influence, structure, feedback, effective
- A mirror model could be attractive to the Community Planning Partners however lots of groups do not naturally fit into Community Planning themes
- Need to identify and communicate with as many organisations as possible
- Capacity of small organisations to send a representative to a forum
- What strand does my organisation fit into?
- Need a structure in place to find and record the contacts for groups
- Groups often do not want to be involved in meetings which do not concern their area of operation
- Could have an electronic forum, communicating by the internet - some groups already use this means of communication
- Groups could decide how they want to receive the information - could use different means of communication; email, phone, letter
- Communication issues – how can the Interface maintain good communication between all the groups and itself?
- Everyone needs to have an equal voice
- Number of questions about the Single Outcome Agreement and the Community Planning Partnership
- There will be difficulties in getting the model working – we need to be realistic and do it by stages
- It is new and a challenge for everyone, trust is needed
- The new interface tasked and funded to provide the 4 key functions.