A guide for commissioning in Manchester with the third sector

Manchester compact / partnership working / community engagement / shared principles / consultation / review / Manchester model / tender specification / procurement / standing orders / strategic needs assessment / policy tools / jargon buster / links to websites / statutory sector / third sector / service users / quality services / contracts / good practice / funding agreements / value for money / outcomes / infrastructure support / capacity building / training
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This document is a resource with links to relevant information and websites however, we cannot take responsibility for websites changing. If you have difficulty using a link we will respond to feedback and update the link when possible.

Email: MCC Third Sector Team
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1 Introduction

Welcome to this hub of information about commissioning in Manchester.

This guide is a tool for:

- Commissioners where services are or could be provided by the third sector.
- Third sector organisations providing services of interest to commissioners
- Third sector organisations new to commissioning in Manchester

It’s aim is to clarify how the Manchester statutory sectors and third sector can work together by considering:

- Shared principles
- Responsibilities and undertakings
- Improved practice

The need for a hub of information emerged from feedback in partnership forums. As a result of this the Manchester Partnership Working Group (MPWG) established a commissioning task group to develop this guide and look at ways to improve good practice in all commissioning which involves the third sector. For more information about the task group contact: MCC Third Sector Team

The commissioning task group would welcome feedback on this document and how it works in practice. If you would like to make suggestions or provide comments please email: MCC Third Sector Team

Organisations in Manchester looking for advice and support on commissioning can contact:

Website: Manchester Community Central
Telephone: 0333 321 3021 (calls charged at the same rate as a local call from a landline or mobile)
Email: info@mcrcommunitycentral.org
2 Definitions of key terms

Choosing what to commission (what to purchase)

Deciding on a procurement procedure

Prequalification (PQQ) this will not always apply

Assess Need

COMMISSIONING AND PROCUREMENT

Inviting tenders (ITT)

End of the contract

Awarding the contract

Evaluating tenders

Third Sector
Generally we use the term third sector throughout this document. ‘Third sector’ describes organisations that are not for private profit, which are value-led for public benefit and not part of government. The third sector includes voluntary and community organisations, charities, faith groups, social enterprises, community interest companies, cooperatives and mutuals both large and small.

Commissioning
Commissioning is the whole cycle of assessing the needs of people in an area, designing and then procuring an appropriate service to provide for those needs, followed by a review to inform future commissioning – see section 3 ‘The Manchester Model’.

Procurement
Procurement is the specific aspect of the commissioning cycle which focuses on the process of buying services, from initial advertising through to appropriate contract or grant arrangements. There are different ways in which a service can be secured. Dependant on the value of a contract and the nature of the services UK and EU procurement rules apply. Details of the Council’s financial regulations be found in the Manchester City Council constitution. (see also section 6 – MCC Financial Regulations)

The Procurement Team should be involved early in the process to ensure correct procurement and tendering procedures are put in place and required service outcomes are factored in.
**Tendering**

After advertising a requirement for goods or services, tendering is usually either a one stage or two stage process.

**Open procedure (One stage):** All organisations registering an interest in the opportunity are invited to tender (ITT). There is a qualification stage to assess whether a bid is suitable for consideration.

**Restricted procedure (Two stage):** A prequalification questionnaire (PQQ) is issued to all the organisations registering interest in the opportunity. Only those who meet the evaluation criteria set in the PQQ are invited to submit a tender.

Depending on the service to be commissioned and legal requirements the Procurement Team will advise the most appropriate route to take. When there is an invitation to tender, an organisation will have access to a tendering pack. This includes a service specification, pricing schedule, evaluation criteria (scoring system) and the relevant terms and conditions.

Successful tenders are followed by the award of a contract for goods or services delivered according to specific terms set out in the contract between the public body (the purchaser) and the third sector organisation (the contractor).

**Grants**

A grant to a third sector organisation can be:

- financial support for specified aspects of the organisations expenditure.
- financial support for delivery of services specified in a funding agreement in which case it should be treated as a ‘restricted fund’ in the organisations accounts as it may only be used for defined purposes.

Successful grant applications are confirmed by a grant offer letter and funding agreement. The agreement sets out the understandings of the public body and the third sector organisation about the service to be provided.

Grant-in-aid is unrestricted financial support for overall activity and not any specified project or expenditure. This is less common now as funders need to have clear outcomes and evidence of benefit.

**Grants or contracts**

Generally it is preferred to have a funding mix which includes a healthy proportion of grant funding and contracts. The commissioning process should be able to identify where grants are more appropriate than contract arrangements.
### Input, Outputs and Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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| Input | The resources that are used to run a project, organisation or programme. | • Staff or volunteer time  
• Premises and equipment  
• Funding grants or contracts |
| Output| The activities, services and products provided by an organisation. The output measures the activity, it should be provable and easily defined. | • Training sessions  
• Polio vaccinations  
• Advice sessions |
| Outcome| The changes, benefits, learning or other effects that happen as a result of services and activities provided by an organisation. The outcome measures the success or result of the activity | • People achieving a learning goal  
• People not getting polio  
• Successful benefit applications |

Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes will be made SMART in the Commissioning Process.
SMART is: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound

### Glossary of terms and jargon busters
- Charities Evaluation Services – Glossary
- North West Commissioning Road Map – Glossary of terms
- National Childrens Bureau (NCB) Voluntary Sector Support
3 The Manchester Model for Commissioning

‘Improving Joint Commissioning in Manchester: Introducing the Manchester Model and Guidance for implementation’ (March 2009) is a detailed proposal for joint commissioning.

The model is designed to introduce consistency to the commissioning process in Manchester and provide clearer strategic links between commissioning plans and Local Area Agreement outcomes.

The Manchester Model

- **1 Duty to inform, consult and involve**
  - The Manchester Community Strategy sets out how the Council and its partners in health, education, transport, police, local people the third sector and others plan to drive forward change.

- **2 Assess Needs**
  - Undertake joint strategic needs analysis, focusing on the aspirations of communities as set out in the sustainable community strategy.
  - Highest key priorities and outcomes.

- **3 Plan services**
  - Clarify resources for joint commissioning.
  - Devise thematic strategies and action plans focusing on outcomes and achievement of LAA targets.
  - Ensure user engagement in strategy development.

- **4 Secure outcomes**
  - Commissioning co-ordinators ensure robust joint commissioning processes.
  - Operational commissioning through delivery agents.

- **5 Monitor and review**
  - Regular meetings to review joint commissioning plans and ensure performance is on track.
  - Ensure progress is reported regularly.

- **6 Improve**
  - Ensure performance information is fed back into strategy, and services are de-commissioned where necessary.

Joint Commissioning is when two or more organisations work together and pool their resources to co-ordinate and implement a common strategy for commissioning of services. An example of this is when the City Council and Manchester NHS work together.

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three-year agreement between Manchester City Council, its partners and the government. The agreement identifies priorities that most affect the lives of Manchester people and sets targets to raise the performance of the city, it has been developed and agreed with all members of the Manchester Partnership.

The Third Sector should be linked-in at all stages.
Duty to inform, consult and involve

“This is at the heart of the whole commissioning process. The views and aspirations of users, stakeholders, local residents and providers form the basis of joint strategic needs assessment and the commissioning activities that follow.” (Manchester Model).

It is the responsibility of the public sector to ensure there is information, consultation and engagement activities at the centre of service delivery, policy and decision making.

There should be engagement with service users, stakeholders and current and potential services providers.

Partnership is important because

“Third sector organisations are often well placed to understand what people want and how their needs can be met. Using the experience and expertise of third sector organisations to co-design services and programmes will contribute to achieving services that focus on outcomes and reflect the needs of individuals and communities” (Refreshing the Compact: A framework for partnership working).

Working together helps learning from previous commissioning experiences. The Third Sector’s strength is that it reaches parts of the community which may be distant (for a variety of reasons) from the public sector. A partnership approach ensures this information is gathered and feeds into the commissioning cycle before decisions are made.

Statutory sector commissioners can/should

- know (or find out) who the third sector stakeholders are and consider how they can be kept informed, consulted and involved
- consider opportunities for partnership such as third sector representation on steering groups, ensuring there can be involvement without a conflict of interest
- use feedback from the third sector to inform the development of the commissioning cycle and be clear on what can and cannot be influenced, for example legal requirements will not be subject to review
- consider the resource implications of involving the third sector and ensure sufficient time and importance is allocated to this stage of the commissioning cycle
- consider using new technology to provide accessible ways of getting feedback and make use of local platforms such as the community network and ward co-ordination

Third sector stakeholders can/should

- be aware when time is given for consultation (three months unless there is a reason to be less) responses should be the result of consideration by management committees or members of community groups. (Compact for Manchester)
- be linked to relevant information networks in order to know about and contribute to engagement opportunities and consultations in which they may be stakeholders
- show how the contribution they make is shaped by service users and their feedback
- identify where necessary the costs of involvement and engagement
Assess needs

“This involves an assessment of opportunity and of aspiration for communities. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment provides the foundation for priorities in the thematic commissioning strategy and related action plan” (Manchester Model).

Engagement with service users, either directly or through third sector organisations, is more likely to result in appropriate and effective services. It is important to have a clear assessment of need before defining the services to be commissioned to ensure they meet the requirements of communities that are supposed to benefit.

Evidence can be gathered using local intelligence, both formal and informal, to see what needs there are in the community and how well services are meeting those needs. The evidence collected then has to be analysed to establish priorities. This is a process which commissioners initiate but it is dependent on everyone else for the range and depth of the information captured.

Partnership is important because

“Although many third sector organisations receive no public funding, they still have an important role in shaping and reviewing policies and programmes by representing the views of users and communities” (Refreshing the Compact: A framework for partnership working).

The third sector is responsible for representing the views of users and communities and the council has a responsibility to listen and use this information to inform services being commissioned. The third sector adds to local knowledge and understanding and can help shape future services.

Where there is a partnership approach to needs assessment being carried out – the duty to inform, consult and involve is being put into practice. Working with the third sector can provide a link to service users and communities that are often the most vulnerable and hard to reach.

Statutory sector commissioners can/should

- Consider having a partnership led steering group for this stage of the commissioning cycle and if so include a third sector representative
- Where appropriate involve third sector organisations in undertaking research or advocacy to access socially excluded groups, encourage stakeholder involvement and communicate the findings and priorities
- Consider the resource implications of ‘assessing need; which involve the third sector. Expect the cost of this to be built into tenders for contracts.
- Provide clear mechanisms for third sector organisations to contribute their knowledge and provide incentives for them to do so.
- Not assume ‘conflict of interest’ when involving partners in this stage of the commissioning cycle.
Third sector stakeholders can/should

- Encourage commissioners in partnership forums to involve Third Sector providers and service users when assessing need.
- Encourage user feedback, including a question on where gaps in service have been experienced and where things have worked well, so this can be included in assessment of need exercises.
- Find out which part of the Manchester Community Network represents the service area you are working in and make sure you are on any relevant news feeds.
- Be prepared to adapt and change services to meet local needs where these are identified.
- Build into budgets the resources to gather service user feedback and assess need and expect that service user feedback will be a requirement of any contract won.
- Gather and provide evidence to demonstrate unmet need.
Plan services

“Effective planning is important as it allows commissioners to secure the most appropriate provider to deliver those outcomes identified at the analysis stage” (Compact Commissioning Guidance February 2009).

Planning of services takes place after assessment of need has been completed. This stage is to design how the service will look and ‘map the market’ which means identifying current providers delivering in the service area. This is important for small third sector organisation’s who may need capacity building support or grant aid to assist taking part in any new procurement process. This stage should lead to a commissioning strategy, to identify what is to be commissioned and an action plan.

Partnership is important because

- Public sector bodies can benefit from the expertise and grassroots reach of the third sector to contribute to designing a new service or remodel an existing one.
- Involvement of the Third Sector at this stage can help facilitate a culture of trust and partnership between the third sector and public sector.
- A wider supply base, inclusive of the third sector will mean greater opportunity to find the right provider and achieve the right service at the right price.
- Partnership enables sharing of knowledge and experience in the planning of services.

Statutory sector commissioners can/should

- Find out the number, size and capabilities of third sector providers in the market. Consider the capacity building needs of the third sector if there are to be substantial changes to the next stage i.e. the procurement processes.
- Communicate future commissioning plans to the third sector to enable suppliers to forecast and plan capacity effectively.
- Liaise with local infrastructure organisations to see if there is relevant information about third sector providers that will be useful to the planning stage.
- Consider use of soft marketing techniques and make time for consultation with stakeholders and partners to allow some debate before a specification gets signed off.
- Listen to and usefully interpret what the third sector is saying to get the right services for the user and achieve best value.
- Consider using an advisory panel with specialists from the third sector included. However care must be taken not to give any potential contractors, or anyone with a commercial interest in the service an advantage.
- Consider using a third sector organisation with specialist knowledge to act as a consultant in designing service.
Third sector stakeholders can/should

- reach a significant number of third sector organisations through its infrastructure, networks and forums. These lines of communication facilitate contact with potential providers.
- share good practice and respond to need, be flexible focused and in touch with different communities to lobby for client interests.
- Have an understanding of the (legal) constraints in which the public sector is working
- offer creative and innovative opportunities for the public sector to re-design, improve and achieve better outcomes and value for money in relation to the design and delivery of services.
- ensure high levels of quality standards are met and services are provided in the best interests of the service users rather than in the best interest of their own organisation.
Secure outcome

“Choosing the most appropriate provider to deliver the required outcomes is vital. It will mean that individuals and local communities receive the most appropriate services and enjoy the greatest impact” (Compact Commissioning Guidance February 2009).

This stage identifies the way in which the outcomes of commissioning strategies will be achieved. There are different ways of commissioning a service, project or a piece of work. Primarily the choice is between a grant making approach or contracting through procurement. Secure Outcome means to ensure the commissioning process leads to the delivery of services that actually achieve the intended outcomes.

Partnership is important because

- Choosing the most appropriate way to commission a piece of work will require a readiness on the part of potential providers in the Third Sector.
- Involvement of the Third sector in a Strategic Commissioning group and appropriate forums will provide challenge and support for best practice in securing outcomes across thematic partnerships and agencies.
- It adds experience, understanding, shared values and mutual goals for the greater benefit.
- The third sector is good at achieving outcomes in relation to service delivery and the public sector is good at gathering intelligence to identify appropriate outcomes.

Statutory sector commissioners can/should

- Consider the most appropriate type of funding. It may be that where there is only one potential provider and/or the project is of a low financial value grant funding may be more appropriate than competitive tendering and procurement.
- Ensure specifications, information, questionnaires and application forms are clear and accessible.
- In the specification provide a clear ‘minimum’ expectation of outputs and outcomes.
- Ensure the service to be delivered will be to a good quality and within budget.
- Work with the Procurement Team to ensure the best outcomes are achieved.
- Consider the possible negative impact of service change and service redesign on service users, so this can be minimised.
Third sector stakeholders can/should
- Be signed up to the relevant networks in order to get information about potential funding opportunities.
- Access the Business Opportunities Section on the Council and Manchester NHS websites
- Seek appropriate support from infrastructure support agencies where this is available
- Attend relevant ‘Meet the Buyer’ workshops and information sharing meetings
- Read the specification or funding criteria carefully, know the deadlines, evaluation criteria and information required, eligibility criteria etc and make sure these can be met
- Get advice on and assess the implication of Transfer of Undertakings (TUPE) when bidding for contracts
- Consider the legal responsibilities and liabilities of managing a contract
- Ensure that the service proposal and costings are clear and realistic
- If unsuccessful request feedback on tenders or grant applications submitted
Monitor and review
Monitor means to check what has been done against what was planned. Review is to build into the monitoring process the opportunity for evaluation. In this context it is about monitoring and reviewing a service provided by contractors against the commissioning strategies. This part of the process is essential in order to improve the process.

Partnership is important because
Monitoring and review is essential to assess whether strategic objectives and user needs have been met in the most effective manner. Actively encouraging the involvement of service users and providers in this process can provide valuable insight and the third sector has an important role here through its expertise and reach.

Effective monitoring and review is important to the next stage of the process – to Improve

Statutory sector commissioners can/should
- Build effective monitoring of services, review and data collection into the design stage of the commissioning process, based on the original required outcomes
- Involve the third sector in determining the best way to monitor and review the service being commissioned.
- Have a clear ‘data’ set available between public sector and the contractor for performance management of any commissioned service.
- Not burden third sector providers with onerous reporting or too frequent contract review meetings but it is important to have a clear timetable for review that is adhered to.
- Include Third Sector representation in review bodies of commissioning strategies
- Provide opportunities for third sector partners to feel able to review and challenge the commissioning process
- Have clear monitoring systems in place that are proportionate to the size of the grant or contract
- Provide briefing on the monitoring requirements to organisations being funded for the first time

Third sector stakeholders can/should
- Have appropriate monitoring and information gathering mechanisms in place that can meet the requirements of the contract.
- Provide representation on appropriate partnership forums where there are opportunities to review and challenge commissioning processes.
- When collecting data for monitoring reports think ahead and consider how it can be useful and relevant to the needs assessment stage of the commissioning cycle
- Include in tenders or grant applications the resources needed to effectively monitor and review the service provided
- Provide constructive feedback as part of the monitoring and review process
Improve
This is where lessons learnt from commissioning can lead to new solutions and improved services that reflect changes in local priorities. This is informed by the monitoring and reviewing stages of the commissioning process.

Partnership is important because
The Third Sector can provide innovative ways of delivering value for money. Value for money takes into account quality alongside price and is not simply a lowest cost option. The procurement process will have evaluation criteria with price being only one part of this.

Statutory sector commissioners can/should
• ensure procurement is accessible to the Third Sector and also consider how smaller voluntary and community sector organisations can be given capacity building support to be able to deliver services through the commissioning process (possibly with small grant schemes).
• Make sure the timetable for a commissioning cycle takes into account changes in priorities and the need for service change, redesign and development and at times decommissioning of services.
• Following relevant procurement exercise have post tender evaluation that includes analysis of third sector involvement in the commissioning process and use this information as a reference tool to improve future commissioning.

Third sector stakeholders can/should
• When submitting a tender use ‘full cost recovery’. This means applying for funding to cover the true cost of delivering the service. A comprehensive guide to this can be found on the Big Lottery Fund website.
• Use the infrastructure support in Manchester providing third sector capacity building – see useful weblinks section.
• Refer to Tendering and Bidding Briefing: Give your tender a winning chance on the Finance Hub of the Charities Aid Foundation website.

Both the statutory sector and third sector can/should
• consider ‘new’ approaches to consultation or assessing need The Manchester Community Engagement Toolkit provides useful guidance on effective consultation for both the statutory and the third sector.
• make clear how ‘collecting data’ from use of existing services can be fed into the assessment of need and be clear about how information collected will be used.
• as in all partnerships, remember it is important to give each other credit for contributions and factor in the need to constructively challenge and be challenged on your assumptions.
• Be aware of new things coming on stream such as ‘collaborative’ commissioning or opportunities for consortium development.
4 Think Commissioning!

Principles of Commissioning
Commissioning is a complex process and there are many ways of describing its different stages. It may be managed in different ways by different authorities however nationally there are general principles that apply which have been highlighted by the National Programme for Third Sector Commissioning at the Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government (I&DeA). These principles of good commissioning are core to the Manchester model:

- Understanding the needs of users and other communities by ensuring that, alongside other consultees, you engage with the third sector organisations, as advocates, to access their specialist knowledge;
- Consulting potential provider organisation, including those from the third sector and local experts, well in advance of commissioning new services, working with them to set priority outcomes for that service;
- Putting outcomes for users at the heart of the strategic planning process;
- Mapping the fullest practical range of providers with a view to understanding the contribution they could make to delivering those outcomes;
- Considering investing in the capacity of the provider base, particularly those working with hard-to-reach groups;
- Ensuring contracting processes are transparent and fair, facilitating the involvement of the broadest range of suppliers, including considering sub-contracting and consortia building, where appropriate;
- Ensuring long-term contracts and risk-sharing, wherever appropriate, as ways of achieving efficiency and effectiveness: and
- Seeking feedback from service users, communities and providers in order to review the effectiveness of the commissioning process in meeting local needs.

Information
There isn’t one place to find out everything about commissioning in Manchester but here are some places to start.

- The CHEST The North West’s Local Authority Procurement Portal
- MCC Tenders and Contracts with a link to the e-business portal The Chest.
- NHS Manchester: Talking Health a place to provide feedback and see how feedback influences changes to services
- NHS Manchester for information about current strategies and consultations
- Manchester Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) focused on health and wellbeing
Communication

- All documents about commissioning, including the specification and the contract, should be clear and in plain English.
- Community engagement opportunities should be well publicised and with sufficient time allocated. It should be made clear what can and cannot be influenced.
- The Third Sector Team can advise on running Compact awareness training for commissioners and third sector partners.
- Consultation can be creative with a variety of mediums available to communicate for example local media, community radio etc.
- Commissioners need to consult with procurement at an early stage to identify timetables that may apply and resources that may be needed.

Feedback

- Partnership working should be meaningful with clear aims achieved as a result of feedback from the third sector.
- The commissioning cycle should be able to show the positive influence and successes in partnership working. For example by providing background on how a new specification for a service has been developed taking into account the community engagement.
- Commissioners should be able to evidence their engagement processes and the impact this makes on commissioning decisions in order to share learning and good practice.
- Before assessing need learn from good practice such as the work of the Partnership for Older People’s Project (POPPS) or work Breakthrough has done with user-led organisations.

Resources

- Infrastructure Support Provision in Manchester: the GIO Project and Manchester Community Central are available to support the capacity building and training needs of the Third Sector.
- The MCC Third Sector Team or Community Network for Manchester (CN4M) can advise commissioners on ways to involve the Third sector.
- Manchester Alliance for Community Care (MACC) can provide support to third sector organisations working in the area of Adult and Children’s Services.
- Where information already exists we should avoid duplication and build on previous knowledge and intelligence. This means we need a joined up approach and good use of resources in order to prevent consultation fatigue.
- In Manchester there are plans to develop a community engagement database where all services across the partnership will be required to provide details of engagement activity. This will provide a useful way of finding out what consultation is taking place.
- A Manchester guide is in development to advise commissioners on the most appropriate funding approach (grants or contracts) to ensure outcomes are met.
• The Commissioning Task Group sits within the Manchester Partnership and includes representatives from the City Council, the NHS and the Third sector. The aim of the group is to identify ways to improve commissioning between statutory and third sector partners.

• The Strategic Commissioning Group convened by the office of the Assistant Deputy Chief Executive (Performance) includes a representative from the Third Sector

• Various support and training opportunities can be found on the new training calendar at Manchester Community Central, the support agency for the voluntary and community sectors.

Service Change and Service Redesign

Over time requirements for services will change, monitoring may raise issues of value for money and there may be legal requirements to go out to tender. It is inevitable that with changing demands from service users and funding limitations service specifications will be redesigned. This can lead to the closing or reducing or remodelling an existing service.

When this happens, there are legal issues and service user implications that need to be considered. For service users, a decision to decommission a service means the same provider may no longer provide them with the service, or it may not be provided in the same way, in the same place or at all.

This guide cannot cover the full detail of managing service change, redesign and decommissioning but here are some points to consider.

Commissioners and procurement services need to think about:

• Reasons for service change and redesign

• Developing guidance toolkits or protocol documents to support service change and service redesign

• Having a designated officer as a main contact for affected organisations

• Including guidance on service change with information sent with tender documents

• Have impact assessment forms to objectively guide the decision making process

• A timetable that takes into account ‘seamless’ transfer should this be needed between services

• Providing feedback to unsuccessful applicants for tenders

• Briefings for affected stakeholders and service users
The third sector, if retendering for services need to think about:

- The reasons for service change and redesign
- The implications of closing down all or part of a service.
- Timescale available to manage change
- Full cost recovery built into tender to meet costs of start up and close down of a service
- The implications for staff employed to provide a contracted service,
- The possibility of TUPE arrangements where a change in service provider may involve a transfer of an undertaking to continue to provide a distinct identifiable service. Appropriate advice to manage this change is essential
- If securing a new contract the possibility of having to manage TUPE arrangements. Appropriate advice to manage this change is essential
- Premises – termination or assignment of leases
- Organisational issues, if a contract comes to an end such as disposal of assets, records storage, final accounts and reports
- Information sharing if there is a change of service, who will be notified and by which service provider/s
- Compliance with any regulatory requirements that may apply.
5 Partnership Working

In this section we consider the advantages and difficulties of partnership working and how to improve partnership communication.

Partnership working with the third sector in commissioning adds value because of the valuable contribution the third sector makes across the five themes of the Manchester Community Strategy which are: Economic Development, Children and Young People, Health and Well Being, Sustainable Neighbourhoods and Crime and Disorder.

The advantages of partnership working are:

- Improved services meeting the needs of local communities
- More co-ordinated service provision
- Opportunities for service user involvement and a chance for service users to shape the service provided

The challenges of partnership working are:

- Time needed to include planning and consultation
- Trying to get the right partners involved at the different stages in the process
- Not raising expectations that cannot be realised
- Understanding different perspectives
- Knowing who to contact for a representative view
- Possible conflict of interest

There is so much information around that it is important to consider what will be the most effective form of communication with partners. There are various tools of partnership:

**The Statutory sector:** Need to ensure website information on commissioning is up to date, has relevant links, is in plain english and can be easily found by search engines.

**The Third Sector:** Need to have relevant networks with an efficient use of infrastructure support, websites, email bulletins, newsletters etc.

**Partnership forums:** Both the statutory sector and third sector need to consider when there are possibilities for partnership such as representation on steering groups, funding panels, strategy groups etc.

**Consultations:** This can be a useful tool for gathering information and there are different ways to do this. The Manchester Community Engagement Toolkit provides useful guidance on effective consultation for both the statutory and the third sector. There are a number of tools that can be used to carry out positive community engagement activity for example ‘Appreciative Inquiry’. This is an organisational development process which encourages people to build on the positives rather than just inviting complaints or criticism. It looks at what is working well, what would work well in the future, planning and prioritising what we need and implementing.
**Calls for partnership:** This is an area for development as commissioning opportunities often benefit from service providers coming together to link different areas of expertise into a more co-ordinated service. How commissioners can promote or help this can be considered at all stages of the commissioning cycle. The third sector can also promote and encourage partnerships in tendering and a tool for this is on the One Central Place – calls for partnership working

**The Manchester Community Strategy**

Manchester’s vision set out in the community strategy and local area agreement framework emphasises the importance of “making sure that people can participate and engage in lots of different ways to make Manchester an even better place to live, work, study and play in”. The pie chart below depicts the 6 actions of engagement set out in the community engagement strategy.

The voluntary and community sectors have been involved in the production of this strategy and with its ongoing development and review.

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**Manchester community engagement strategy**

- Informing
- Supporting community action
- Devolving decisions
- Researching
- Consulting
- Involving
6 Useful weblinks

In this section we have included some website links to give more detailed information on topics covered by this guide. The sections are:

- Compact
- Glossary of Terms and Jargon Busters
- Manchester City Council
- Manchester NHS and Health Partners
- National Support Agencies
- Partnerships
- Procurement
- Voluntary Sector Infrastructure

**Compact**

**Working Together: A Compact for Manchester**

The Compact launched in 2003 was developed through extensive consultation between Manchester City Council and its voluntary and community sectors. It has been endorsed by the Manchester Partnership and provides a firm framework for effective working relationships between Manchester City Council and its voluntary and community sectors. The Manchester Compact has codes of practice in; Funding Consultation, Volunteering and Inclusion. This guide has been developed in partnership and through consultation and has been guided by the principles of the Compact.

**Commission for the Compact**

The Compact is an agreement between Government and the third sector in England which recognises shared values, principles and commitments and sets out guidelines for how both parties should work together. The website provides information about the work of key organisations associated with the Compact, current policy and research work, latest news, useful documents and guidance, examples of good practice and links to local Compacts.

**Commission for the Compact Publications**

Publications include the Funding and Procurement Code.
Manchester city council

MCC Third Sector Team –
The Third Sector Team manages the Council’s central investment programme in voluntary and community sector activity. The section administers CASH grants which provide funding for community projects benefiting local area priorities; and CHANGE grants funding for capacity building small or new community groups in Manchester. The section leads on policy issues relating to the Council’s relationship with the Third Sector.

MCC Commissioning Strategies –
A search on Manchester City Council website will provide details of service strategies. When commissioning takes place it will follow the different stages of the Manchester Model.

MCC Financial Regulations –
Manchester City Council Constitution sets out Financial Regulations (Part 5) including financial systems and procedures and contract procurement rules.

Manchester NHS and health partners

Joint Health Unit
The Joint Health Unit is a key part of the public health system in Manchester. It is a team that focuses on strategic planning and partnership working for health improvement and tackling health inequalities. It is based with the Council, but jointly funded by the Council and NHS Manchester.

Manchester NHS – World Class Commissioning
Manchester NHS is responsible for making sure funding for health services is targeted where it is needed the most. This role (commissioning) involves directing NHS funds into a wide range of services that meet the needs of all communities in the City of Manchester. This is a link to information about NHS Commissioning.

North West Commissioning Road Map
This website is aimed at commissioners of adult health and wellbeing services in local authorities and PCTs in the North West. It is a way of sharing practice around the region by offering advice, case studies, summaries of national guidance, comprehensive resources sections with links to other websites, and regional contact details

Manchester Alliance for Community Care
MACC is an alliance of voluntary and community sector organisations formed to challenge inequalities in health and social care. It has evolved to become a specialist infrastructure organisation which brings together and communicates the views of those involved in community based initiatives. It works within the community to develop new ways of meeting people’s needs and encourages statutory agencies to learn from and make use of the experience of the local voluntary sector.
National support agencies

ACEVO
ACEVO (Association of Chief Executive’s of Voluntary Organisations) has developed a range of training programmes, publications and support offerings to help infrastructure support bodies make a difference with the groups they support and for frontline groups to win the contracts and sub-contracts they need.

Finance Hub of the CAF
Finance Hub of the CAF (Charities Aid Foundation) has a section for voluntary and community organisation’s to help understanding of the procurement process.

Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government (IDeA)
IDeA supports improvement and innovation in local government by working with local authorities and their partners to develop and share good practice. The website includes useful online resources and networks including:

-Idea Voluntary and Community Sector – to helping understanding of the third sector.
-Idea National Programme for Third Sector Commissioning – providing support for commissioners.

NAVCA
NAVCA as part of a community sector partnership for children and young people called kindle have written a short document called ‘Commissioning and the Community Sector’ that provides an introduction to commissioning for small and medium sized voluntary and community organisations working with children and young people.

VCS Engage: Report on Commissioning of children’s Services in the THIRD SECTOR
This is a report produced by VCS Engage a programme funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families. VCS Engage aims to equip organisations with the skills and knowledge needed to effectively bid for, and secure, public sector contracts.

Partnerships
The Manchester Partnership is committed to providing excellent services to Manchester residents. To achieve this it is driving the Manchester Community Strategy by bringing together health, education, transport, police, local people, the third sector and others. The third sector are represented in the Manchester Partnership through the work of the Community Network for Manchester (CN4M).

A Manchester Community Engagement Strategy was written in 2003 and adopted by the Manchester Partnership. It sets out what Community Engagement is and why we do it. One of the aims of the strategy is to support development of local organisations and community groups ability to influence services. This strategy is currently under review.

The Manchester Community Engagement Toolkit is a practical guide to carrying out community engagement. For more information on community engagement, contact the Area Co-ordination and Third Sector Team.
Manchester Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2008–2013
The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) developed by the Joint Health Unit in partnership with Manchester NHS, Children's Services, Adult Social Care and Manchester Local Involvement Network builds on needs assessment work carried out in the city, including the Children and Young People’s Plan and the various plans for Manchester NHS and Adult Social Care. This first JSNA has a strong focus on health and well-being. The JSNA is expected to influence the commissioning process across both health and social care. It is also expected to underpin the development and implementation of the Local Area Agreement and the Commissioning Strategic Plan (CSP) of NHS Manchester.

One Central Place – Calls for partnership working
The One Central Place directory for the third sector in Manchester includes a tool for partnership working. The website enables organisations to put out calls to identify and consult with interested voluntary and community groups listed on the website. The function can be used for various enquiries such as: running a survey; searching a partner to a funding application, looking for support to run an event or other ways to build capacity in the sector.

Procurement
The CHEST
The North West’s Local Authority Procurement Portal

The VAULT
A register of contracts currently held by many local authorities in the North West

MCC Tenders and Contracts
A link to finding out about current tenders by providing a link to the e-business portal (The Chest). This enables existing and potential suppliers to view all forthcoming contract opportunities for Manchester and other Councils in one place

NAVCA Pathways Through the Maze
The National Association of Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) ‘Pathways Through the Maze’ is a comprehensive guide to procurement regulations written for voluntary organisations and community groups.

National Audit Office - Decision Support Tool
This tool developed by the National Audit Office can assist public sector agencies make a decision on which funding (grant or procurement) will be used. It has been reviewed by an expert advisory panel including representatives from government and the third sector.

National Audit Office - Successful Commissioning
This aims to help commissioners in the public sector get better value for money from Third Sector organisations. It also aims to help third sector organisations become more informed about the commissioning process and what they should expect from financial relationships with the public sector.
TFC ‘Handy Guide’ to Tendering and Procurement
A guide prepared by Tendering for Care provides information for those who may not be directly involved in preparation of tenders but need to be informed about the legislation. For example: Trustees and Directors of Charities, Directors of Companies, Managers and advisors working with organisations on the tendering and procurement process.

Voluntary sector infrastructure
Community Network for Manchester
Community Network for Manchester is a collection of voluntary and community groups organised through networks, that exists to find new ways of enabling people to fully participate in Manchester’s economic, social and cultural life. It has effective communication channels to the sector including weekly e-bulletins.

Funding Central – NCVO
Funding Central is a free smart website for all third sector organisations, including community groups, providing access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, plus a wealth of tools and resources supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs.

GIO Project
The GIO project provides information, advice, training and one-to-one support on issues such as sustainable funding and opportunities for earning income, developing long-term funding strategies, commissioning and tendering, organisational development, governance issues and crisis support.

Manchester Community Central
Manchester Community Central provides advice, support and information for voluntary and community sector groups in Manchester. Information and support is available through a telephone helpline, website, weekly e-bulletin, quarterly newsletter. Information about training opportunities, basic healthchecks and direct support is also provided.

One Central Place
One Central Place is a comprehensive source of contact information for voluntary and community sector groups in Manchester, together with the details of organisations that support the work undertaken within the sector.
7 Conclusion

In the introduction we said that the aim of this guide is to clarify how the Manchester statutory sectors and third sector can work together by considering:

- Shared principles
- Responsibilities and undertakings
- Improved practice

By transforming these ideas into practical actions, taking the principles on board and working in partnership we can improve services. To do this both the statutory and third sectors need to continuously challenge how partnership working can improve. We hope this guide goes some way to helping this happen.

This document has been written with the input and support of the Commissioning Task Group. The membership at the time of writing, January 2010 includes:

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Different formats of this publication are available on request. If you would like to read this document in an alternative format such as larger print, braille or a recorded tape, please contact the Area Co-ordination and Third Sector Team on 0161 234 3141 or email: voluntary.sector.grants@manchester.gov.uk.