

# Getting it right together

The South Gloucestershire Compact

Revised Compact adopted by South Gloucestershire Partnership (July 2014)





### **Foreword**

The national Compact is the agreement between government and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors (often referred to as civil society organisations), which sets out a way of working that improves their relationship for mutual advantage. It considers areas such as involvement in policy and service design, delivery, funding arrangements, promoting equality and strengthening independence.

The national Compact has existed since 1998. The latest version of this document (often referred to as the renewed Compact) was published in December 2010, and reflects policy developments resulting from the change of government.

In South Gloucestershire we produced our own local Compact in November 2004. The aim of this document was similar to the national Compact and focused on further developing our strong relationships and improving our ability to work in partnership between our sectors; the public and the voluntary and community and social enterprise. It was subsequently revised in July 2010 when it was adopted by the South Gloucestershire Partnership. The Compact was refreshed in 2014 and this revision seeks to provide updated content reflecting the legislation changes and to act as a clear reference for our sectors to underpin partnership working.

In November 2012, our Compact received a national award for its partnership working; in helping to defend funding for the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors in South Gloucestershire; and our plans to build social value into our procurement processes. This award evidences our strong relationships within South Gloucestershire. It supports our work to continually improve within the commitments of our Compact.

Signed by

Cllr Heather Goddard

Chair, South Gloucestershire Partnership

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### Introduction

### What is the South Gloucestershire Compact?

The South Gloucestershire Compact is an agreement between the public sector and voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations in South Gloucestershire. It sets out a way of working to strengthen the relationship between the sectors, for the benefit of residents and communities.

This refreshed South Gloucestershire Compact aims to highlight the benefits of working effectively in partnership and to provide a best practice framework, allowing both sectors to understand their commitments to each other.

The South Gloucestershire Compact applies to public sector organisations who have pledged to uphold their commitments; all Town and Parish Councils who have adopted the Parish Charter; and all voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations operating in South Gloucestershire. For further information contact your sector's Compact Champion; details are listed in Appendix 1.

### What the Compact is trying to achieve

The key aim behind the Compact is that the public and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors in South Gloucestershire all share a vision:

## "To serve, represent, develop and promote the wellbeing of local people and communities in South Gloucestershire".

The Compact acknowledges that to serve the local community to the best of our joint ability we all need to work effectively together as partners. This means that from the smallest community group to the largest public sector organisation all have a part to play. Together, the provision of the best possible services and activities for the people and communities of South Gloucestershire can be achieved.

Successful implementation, adherence to and use of the local compact supports effective cross sector collaboration. It gives advantages that are beneficial to each of the specific sectors, as well as to the wider community.

By providing a framework for both sectors to follow it contributes to greater equality in the relationship between partners who may often vary in terms of size, sophistication and influence. It strengthens collaboration, whilst respecting each others mutual rights as independent bodies.



### Strategies and policies

**The Sustainable Community Strategy** is the key policy document that largely drives the development and growth of South Gloucestershire.

The South Gloucestershire Partnership develops and manages implementation of this strategy and endorses the local Compact in its work to improve the quality of life for people in the area. Its members are key representatives from the private, public and voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors.

The Compact also influences the work of South Gloucestershire's strategic partnerships including, but not limited to:

- The South Gloucestershire Partnership
- The South Gloucestershire Equalities Forum
- The Economy and Skills Strategic Partnership
- The Health and Wellbeing Strategic Partnership
- The Safer and Stronger Communities Strategic Partnership
- The Children's Trust Board
- Families in Focus (Troubled Families Initiative) Board.

These partnerships and others have members from the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors on their boards.

Whilst the **Parish Charter\_**supports the aims of the South Gloucestershire Compact, its main focus is the working relationship between town and parish councils and South Gloucestershire Council.

On behalf of the town and parish councils and parish meetings in South Gloucestershire, the Town and Parish Councils Forum has agreed to sign up to the ethos of the South Gloucestershire Compact and adopt the public sector commitments. In doing so, it recognises that many of the fundamental principles of the Parish Charter are the same, that there is a relationship between them and the voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations and this relationship should be managed in accordance with the principles of the Parish Charter and the Compact.

The Police Crime Commissioner's Voluntary and Community Sector Charter is specific to the relationship between the Police Crime Commissioner's Office and the local voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations in the policing area of Avon and Somerset. It sets out an open and transparent way of working together in the provision of projects and activities.



### **Getting it right together**

The growth and development of South Gloucestershire is supported by the strength, independence and collaboration of all the sectors: private, public, voluntary, community and social enterprise. The Compact focuses on the public and voluntary, community and social enterprise sector's relationship. Functions that involve the distribution of public money by the private sector through sub-contracting arrangements with the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors are covered by this local Compact.

#### **Public sector**

The public sector is the group of bodies or organisations funded by public money that is responsible for delivering public services on behalf of the government in South Gloucestershire. It is governed by public law and stringent transparent accountability regulations.

Public sector organisations who have formally adopted the South Gloucestershire Compact:

Avon Fire and Rescue Service

Avon Local Councils Association

Avon and Somerset Police

South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group

Avon Local Councils

Avon and Somerset Police

Town and Parish Council Forum

### Voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors

The voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors are often referred to as "the third sector" or "civil society organisations". Organisations within this sector are non profit distributing and independent, usually with an unpaid voluntary management committee. They exist for the good of the community or specific equality groups, to promote their social, environmental or cultural objectives.

The size and sophistication of these organisations can vary considerably; from large national charities with many staff and volunteers to small community groups with a few members. The legal structures available to these organisations include Unincorporated Association; Company Limited by Guarantee; Industrial Provident Society; and Community Interest Company. Usually, if the organisation's purpose is charitable and its income is over £5,000 registration is required with the Charity Commission. The structures include Unincorporated but Registered Charity; Unincorporated Association; Charitable Trust; Charitable Company and the new Charitable Incorporated Organisation.



South Gloucestershire has an independent, thriving and diverse range of organisations in operation providing a wide range of services and activities:

advice agencies	advocacy groups	amateur sports clubs
arts, heritage and cultural organisations	childcare providers	churches and other faith communities
clubs and societies	community development organisations	community groups
equalities groups	health and social care service providers	housing providers
infrastructure organisations	local/neighbourhood support groups	regeneration groups
training providers	uniformed groups	youth organisations
village and community halls		

The above list is not exhaustive but serves to give an indication of the diverse range of voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations operating in South Gloucestershire.

### **Compact Implementation Group**

The South Gloucestershire Compact Implementation Group manages and monitors the local compact. It meets quarterly; works to an agreed action plan, reports directly to the South Gloucestershire Partnership's Chief Officer's Group and annually provides a report to the partnership. The group's responsibilities include:

- to oversee implementation of the local Compact
- to undertake an annual review of the Compact to ensure that its impact and effectiveness are maintained and developed
- to monitor adherence to the Compact commitments and to manage the dispute resolution process
- to develop best practice across and between sectors
- to develop a clear strategy to fund the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors.

### Membership

Representatives of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors on the Compact Implementation Group are CVS South Gloucestershire, Southern Brooks Community Partnership and The Care Forum. Their role is to represent the views and opinions of their sector. The public sector members are as listed under the previous section.



### Codes of good practice

There are four codes of good practice covered by the Compact. Under each of these codes is a list of commitments for each of the sectors to follow. The aim of the codes is to improve the social, environmental and economic wellbeing of South Gloucestershire. Furthermore, they strive to adhere to the "Eight Principles of Good Commissioning" as defined by the National Audit Office Successful Commissioning Toolkit.

### Code 1 Shared responsibilities

We share a number of common commitments and these are as follows:

### **Co-production**

We will explore co-production as part of the commissioning strategy. Co-production can enable service users to influence the support and services they receive; or where groups of people work together to influence the way that services are designed, commissioned and delivered.

### Independence

We recognise each others' independence and the role of infrastructure organisations in supporting this. We understand that thriving, sustainable and diverse voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors are an essential part within communities in South Gloucestershire; contributing to the local economy and adding value to local activities and resources. Infrastructure organisations are a key element of this.

As an independent sector; voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations have the right to campaign within the law in order to advance their aims, to comment on public sector policy, to challenge that policy irrespective of any funding relationship that might exist and to determine and manage their own affairs.

### Mutual respect

We understand that we each have distinct but complementary roles which are equally important and valid in the development and delivery of public policy and services in South Gloucestershire.

### **Promotion of the South Gloucestershire Compact**

We understand that the successful implementation of the local Compact depends on broad awareness, understanding and application across the sectors. We undertake to:

- feature the Compact codes of good practice in communications such as newsletters and websites to our network of influence
- provide training to our staff to ensure that there is awareness of Compact codes and an understanding about how these should be implemented in practice
- include in our staff inductions and handbooks reference to the Compact where appropriate.



### **Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012**

We have a shared commitment to the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 and its implementation locally.

### Responsibility

We have different forms of accountability and are answerable to a different range of stakeholders; common to all is the need for integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, transparency, honesty and leadership.

### **Sustainability**

We undertake to consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of our activities and services. We will seek out the best solutions to meet the current needs of residents and communities in South Gloucestershire without damaging the ability of future generations.

### **Volunteering**

We recognise that volunteering contributes to the wellbeing of people and communities in South Gloucestershire. Volunteers commit their time and energy to benefit society and communities by providing services and activities.

We undertake to value the contribution of volunteers; supporting high standards in training, management and deployment. We support and promote volunteering opportunities.

### Working in partnership

We understand that we can deliver better outcomes for the people and communities of South Gloucestershire by working together in a common preventative approach. We share responsibility in achieving outcomes for people with common aims and objectives and we trust one another to deliver.

### **Code 2 Consultation**

It is widely recognised that consultation is often the key component of policy and service design. Knowledge and expertise gathered in this exercise ultimately lead to the development of more effective policies and services for communities and residents. Public sector bodies should follow the principles set out in the revised Cabinet Office consultation principles published 17 July 2012.



#### Commitments for the public sector

- 1 Assess the impact of new policies, initiatives, regulations, legislation guidance and service changes to identify any impact on the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors; carrying out impact assessments as appropriate.
- 2 Ensure the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors are involved at the earliest possible stage and are able to influence the planning of pertinent consultations that directly impact on the sector.
- 3 Directly consult with the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors on matters or changes which are likely to impact on the sector.
- 4 In order to encourage participation and meaningful engagement in any consultation, a range of accessible and appropriate communication and promotional methods, techniques and formats will be used. Advance notice will be provided whenever possible.
- 5 Demonstrate adherence to relevant legislation. If any statutory consultation process conflicts with the compact then the legislative requirements will take precedence.
- 6 Provide adequate time for responses. The consultation period will be proportionate to the level of change, scale and impact on the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors, service users and communities. The public sector will consult on large, complex, strategic and high impact consultations or those which span a holiday period for up to 12 weeks and others for a minimum of four weeks.

- 1 As appropriate to the role of the organisation publicise consultations and support and encourage responses from members, beneficiaries, volunteers, trustees and networks.
- 2 As appropriate, develop effective engagement across the sector. Focus on those organisations which have historically had limited contact with the public sector.
- **3** Voice specific needs, interests or contributions of equality groups.
- 4 Provide clarity on whose views are represented; including knowledge, experience or evidence based views and how strongly they are held.
- 5 Respect the consulting organisation's statutory duties and processes including obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and maintain the confidentiality of consultation responses as appropriate.
- 6 Plan time to respond to relevant consultations ensuring that submissions are comprehensive and accurate.
- **7** Circulate and publicise feedback results from the consulting organisation.



7 Use consultation responses to inform decision making, develop services and provide feedback on the outcome following the completion of the consultation or decision.

### **Code 3 Funding**

This section aims to make a positive impact on the way in which public sector investment in the community and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors can meet the needs and promote the wellbeing of local people and communities in South Gloucestershire.

The public sector operates within financial constraints that will affect the level of funds available to support the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors. Therefore, it will be expected that all partners ensure they deliver services as effectively, efficiently and economically as possible. The cost of services they provide and the benefits they produce should be open and explicit.

### **Planning**

#### Commitments for the public sector

- **1** Focus on service outcomes that reflect local needs.
- 2 Involve potential providers in the design of proposed services where this is legal.
- 3 Consider the impact of programmes and services on the nine protected characteristic groups as set out in the Equality Act 2010, carrying out impact analysis.
- **4** Recognise that programme and service design requires time and resources.
- **5** Adopt a consistent approach to service design across departments within the same public sector organisation.
- 6 Recognise social, economic and environmental benefits in line with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, within service design where relevant.

- 1 Involve appropriate organisations and service users in contributing to the design of proposed services or projects.
- 2 Be transparent about origins of contributions and how impacted groups and communities have been represented.
- 3 Focus on developing cost effective programmes and services delivering quality outcomes which reflect the needs of the relevant communities.
- 4 Respect confidentiality.
- **5** Feedback the outcomes of service design to those who have contributed.
- 6 Recognise social, economic and environmental benefits in line with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, within service design where relevant.



### Finance, funding options and cost

Making the correct funding choice is fundamental to ensuring the successful delivery of services which may include grants, contracts or the co-production of services.

#### **Commitments for the public sector**

- Recognise the legitimacy and importance of full cost recovery.
- **2** Value volunteering as a contribution to the service or project.
- 3 Develop the understanding of the costs of service delivery within the sectors, using consistent approaches.
- **4** Give due consideration to costs associated with staff development and volunteer involvement.
- 5 Look at the full range of financial options available, including grants, competitive procurement, payment by results, loan finance, in-kind donations or a combination, choosing the appropriate method according to the project required and the delivery organisation.
- 6 Offer contracts of three years or more where funding permits for service commissions in accordance with government guidelines, providing a clear explanation for shorter service commissions.
- 7 Ensure that the size and scale of the funding arrangement is appropriate to the project required.

### Commitments for the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors

1 Adopt full cost recovery principles when costing for a project or service (noting that this excludes costs incurred in bid preparation for either successful or unsuccessful applications).



### Commissioning

#### **Commitments for the public sector**

- 1 Be clear and consistent in the application process, timeframes, eligibility criteria, evaluation process and available resources.
- 2 Ensure the social, economic and environmental benefits in line with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 are considered within the evaluation/assessment process where relevant.
- **3** Adopt a consistent approach to commissioning across departments within the same public sector organisation.
- 4 Ensure all funding/commissioning opportunities are publicised widely in advance of submission deadlines. As time allows build in additional time for partnership and consortium bids as appropriate to the funding stream.
- 5 Ensure the application process and documents are proportionate to the size and complexity of the project and the available funding. Documents should also contain sufficient information to allow organisations to make an informed decision on whether to bid or apply.

### Commitments for the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors

- **1** Ensure eligibility to apply and the ability to deliver the service.
- 2 Clearly identify the social, economic and environmental benefits in line with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 where relevant.
- 3 Consider the impact of the project on the organisation, its mission and balance of funding streams.
- 4 Develop clear working arrangements when working in partnerships/consortiums and be clear on accountability.

### Commissioning and funding decisions

### Commitments for the public sector

- 1 Make selections based on value for money with consideration given to social, economic and environmental benefits in line with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012.
- 2 Make decisions at least three months in advance of the start date of the project or service. Any variances should be justified and explained.
- 3 Provide constructive feedback to unsuccessful organisations in order to help them improve the quality of future applications.



### **Service and project delivery**Commitments for the public sector

- 1 Discuss and agree terms prior to signing the agreement; with particular regard to:
  - a project deliverables
  - b nature, duration and value of the contract
  - c monitoring and evaluation
  - d risks
  - e managing performance
  - f decommissioning and changing circumstances
  - g supporting service and organisational viability.
- 2 Sign Service Level Agreements promptly no less than one month and no more than three months from the start

- 1 Prior to the signing of an agreement, establish a joint monitoring and evaluation framework that incorporates how outcomes, including the social, environmental or economic value will be measured.
- 2 Ensure robust governance arrangements are in place and that the management committee and those concerned are fully aware and informed of the terms of delivery.
- **3** Acknowledge public sector support in publicity and operations.
- 4 Ensure that robust systems for the monitoring, management and audit of the finances of the organisation comply with the accounting standards and guidance from their regulator and the funder.
- **5** Ensure quality service delivery and outcomes in accordance with the agreed terms.
- **6** Ensure the correct governance documents are in place and updated eg: constitution.
- **7** Operate policies and procedures that comply with the base-line standards of funding.
- 8 Recognise that reliance on a single source of funding is unsafe and seek to become sustainable, considering business continuity.
- 9 Endeavour to adopt a flexible approach to requests for project adjustments during the delivery term provided that they do not breach the terms of the contract or impact negatively on the delivery organisation, unless by mutual agreement.
- **10** Ensure where appropriate that employment legislation is complied with.



- **11** Ensure that appropriate levels of reserves are maintained in line with regulators' guidance.
- **12** Where practical, service users and other stakeholders should be involved in the delivery of the service or project.
- **13** Deliver the agreed service to the quality and cost specified.
- **14** Where required ensure that staff and volunteers have an appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service in place.

### **Payments**

#### Commitments for the public sector only

- **1** Agree payment terms and provide a schedule of payments.
- 2 Make payments in advance of expenditure for the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector's organisations if it represents value for money and when agreements have been signed. This is subject to the receipt of monitoring data, performance meeting the standards expected and the commissioning organisation's own rules.
- 3 Make payments as agreed or within a maximum 30 days of invoices being correctly submitted.
- 4 Offer automatic payment by BACS.



### **Monitoring and reporting**

Together the sectors will ensure consistent and robust approaches to contract monitoring. This will enable identification of the quality, outcomes and value for money of existing services, projects and activities. This shared understanding will be used to identify the most appropriate approach to future commissioning, whether this be building on and sustaining existing services and partnerships or prioritising procurement resources.

#### **Commitments for the public sector**

- 1 Prior to the signing of an agreement, establish a joint monitoring and evaluation framework that incorporates how outcomes, including the social, environmental or economic value will be measured.
- 2 Ensure key targets and performance indicators for the project are clear from the outset.
- 3 Ensure that monitoring and evaluation are proportionate to the nature and size of the opportunity.
- **4** Be clear why information is requested and what it will be used for.
- **5** Ensure that reporting requirements are not discriminatory and prevent smaller organisations from bidding.
- 6 Consider whether adequate information is available from existing management information and reporting sources before implementing additional reporting requirements.
- 7 Where possible harmonise monitoring data where there is more than one funder to minimise duplication of information.
- 8 Offer feedback from assessments and monitoring.

- 1 Ensure systems are in place to supply required information. Be honest and transparent in reporting and provide early notice of significant changes in management, finance and risks.
- 2 Ensure all monitoring data is submitted to the agreed deadline, giving notice of at least one week if an extension is required. Include the reasoning.
- 3 Deliver quality assurance and accountability to funders and service users including any complaints received.
- 4 Share where possible statistics and other information which may benefit other groups or communities.
- **5** Where practical, service users and other stakeholders should be involved in the monitoring, development and management of activities of the service or project.



### **Conclusion of financial agreement**

The end of a financial agreement has implications for sectors, the beneficiaries, the commissioned organisation and its staff. Therefore, the decommissioning process requires careful management to minimise negative impacts. Organisations should be honest and open and ensure concerns are raised at the earliest opportunity about potential delivery issues. Reasons for concluding agreements include:

- the end of a grant or contract period
- budget cuts
- changes in service user needs
- performance not meeting agreed standards
- supplier is unable to continue to provide the agreed service due to financial difficulties.

#### Commitments for the public sector

- 1 Involve commissioned organisations in open, honest discussions in order to seek out solutions jointly when there are indications of future resource constraints.
- 2 Assess the impact on beneficiaries, service users, volunteers and staff (where possible at least six months in advance) before making a decision to reduce or end funding, taking into account the social, economic and environmental value in line with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012.
- **3** Give a minimum of three months notice when ending a funding relationship. Provide clear reasons for the decision and give organisations the opportunity to respond before making a final decision.
- 4 Performance issues will be raised by the delegated officer within two weeks of receipt of unsatisfactory monitoring data or at a performance meeting prior to making a decision to end a financial relationship due to non performance. Three months will be given for corrective action. Regular meetings will take place with involved parties. Exceptions are gross misconduct or similar.
- **5** Agree how underspend will be managed, alongside exit costs including an agreement on the division of assets.

- 1 Contribute to service or programme reviews.
- 2 Plan an exit strategy for the end of funding to reduce any impact on service users and the organisation, including agreement on the division of assets.
- **3** Make every effort to secure/apply for alternative sources of funding.
- 4 Where performance issues have been raised by the delegated officer, work to negotiated corrective actions and report on progress as agreed.
- 5 Provide an up to date account of expenditure, including any reserve maintained to cover exit costs.



### Code 4 Achieving equality

The public and voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors share an essential role in achieving equality and fairness for all. Working in partnership, the sectors will tackle and eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

It is crucial that both sectors carefully consider the impact of policies and services on the nine protected characteristic groups as well as complying fully with the requirements of the Equality Duty as set out in s149 of The Equality Act 2010.

The nine protected characteristic groups are:

age	disability	gender reassignment
pregnancy and maternity	marriage & civil partnership	race
religion or belief	sex	sexual orientation

There are many equality groups within South Gloucestershire which represent, act as advocates and provide services. It is important that sufficient robust support is broadly available and accessible to them.

### Tackling discrimination, advancing equality and fostering good relations

#### **Commitments for the public sector**

- Develop with relevant equality groups a strategy for working effectively to meet all aspects of equality legislation including the Equality Duty.
- 2 Ensure that programmes and services are designed to meet the needs of individuals from equality groups.
- 3 Undertake equality analysis on a proportionate basis prior to relevant policy and funding decisions being made.
- 4 Work to develop stronger representation of equality groups at all levels. Ensure they are represented where possible on partnerships and boards. When making decisions any potential impact is taken into account.

- 1 Work with the public sector to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, foster good relations and build community cohesion across diverse groups.
- 2 Develop the capacity of organisations throughout the sector to uphold and reflect equality undertakings in governance and operation.
- 3 Undertake analysis of equality information on a proportionate basis in relation to the performance of services and/or projects.
- 4 Develop strong infrastructure organisations that can represent the interests of equality groups.



- 5 Proactively evaluate success in meeting the objectives of eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.
- **6** Work to develop volunteering opportunities for equality groups.
- 7 Support partnership working across and between sectors.
- **8** Ensure equality groups have fair and equal opportunity to access funding.
- Incorporate clear equality goals and actions within the terms for delivery of service, commissions and programmes.
- **10** When withdrawing a strategic grant from an equality group evaluate the impact, and consider if the funding can be re-allocated to an appropriate or similar organisation.

- **5** Work to develop robust engagement processes to ensure the appointment of suitable representatives on partnerships and boards at a strategic level.
- **6** Take steps to develop mechanisms to identify and facilitate the engagement of underrepresented groups.

Work to develop volunteering opportunities for equality groups.



### **Resolving disputes**

The stronger the relationship between the sectors and the earlier they become involved in planning, commissioning and delivery of services, the less likely it is that conflicts will arise. There will be times when issues arise between organisations which may relate to the Compact codes of good practice stated in this document. In these cases it is recommended that the organisations involved follow the compact dispute resolution process.





#### **Contact details**

For further information contact your sector's Compact Champion

CVS South Gloucestershire www.cvs-sg.org.uk/southgloucestershire-compact

South Gloucestershire Council www.southglos.gov.uk/compact

Our Area Our Future
www.ourareaourfuture.org.uk



If you need this information in another format or language please contact 01454 868004

