



Terms of Reference

1. Authority and Accountability

- 1.1 The Compact Disputes Panel will be convened as and when required and its sole purpose is to understand Compact issues and disputes and work independently to mediate and find an acceptable solution or compromise to the issue highlighted for resolution.
- 1.2 The group will report to the Compact Group which in turn reports to the VCS Joint Task Group and to the VCS Assembly Board. There may be a need to review reporting arrangements at a later date.

2. Chairperson

- 2.1 A Chair will be appointed at each meeting of the Compact Review Panel.

3. Membership

- 3.1 Before a Panel is convened, clear evidence that the issue has progressed through Stages One and Two of the disputes process must be demonstrated.
- 3.2 The Compact Disputes Panel will be formed from the wider membership of the Compact Group. The Panel will be made up of 5 people, of which:
 - 2 will be from the VCSA
 - 2 from the public sector (employed officers)
 - 1 will be from the VCSA support team and their role will be to support the process and ensure actions are completed.
- 3.3 The Panel will not include representatives from any organisation directly involved in the issue/dispute being examined. Panel members will be chosen for their ability to be independent. For this reason, membership of the Panel could change each time the panel is convened.
- 3.4 Where an agreement cannot be made the decision will rest with the appointed Chair's (they will have the casting vote).

3 Functions and Responsibilities of the Group

- 4.1 The principle role of the group is to understand Compact issues/disputes, ensure the Compact disputes process is followed and work to resolve/mediate a solution to the issue/dispute raised.

The group will:

- 4.2 Agree and follow the Compact Disputes process.
- 4.3 Ensure that the process is fair, impartial and transparent.
- 4.4 Maintain confidentiality as appropriate.
- 4.5 Implement equal opportunities in all processes and procedures.
- 4.6 Work towards consensus in decision making.
- 4.7 Ensure that the outcomes of the process are communicated to the parties involved and to the Compact Group.
- 4.8 Ensuring that any learning is drawn out from the outcomes of mediation, and included in the Annual Review of the Compact

5 Process and Administration

- 5.1 The administration for the meeting will be undertaken by the VCS Assembly's support team. The VCS Assembly Coordinator will support the group to ensure the delivery and completion of the disputes process.

The Panel will:

- 5.2 Receive a written briefing, outlining the nature of the issues involved prior to the meeting (marked confidential).
- 5.3 Seek to meet with both parties separately in order to clarify the Panel's understanding of the issues, if this is considered appropriate.
- 5.4 Seek to bring the parties together for a joint discussion in order to develop better understanding and improved relationships between the two parties, if this is considered appropriate and agreed to by both parties.
- 5.5 Consider the evidence and reach a decision (by consensus if possible) on whether the issue constitutes a breach of the Shropshire Compact.
- 5.6 Produce a written recommendation to which both parties will be invited to sign up.
- 5.7 Work with Compact Voice and refer disputes that cannot be resolved at the local level.

6 Organisation of the meetings

- 6.1 The group will meet as required and must complete its business within 2 months of an issue/dispute being logged by the VCS Assembly Coordinator or their deputy.
- 6.2 Any papers will be marked confidential and must be treated as such.