

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: NORTH LOCAL AREA PARTNERSHIP		Subject: THIRD SECTOR INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING STRUCTURES
From: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES		
Date: 17 TH JANUARY 2013	Ref:	

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Partnership of the proposal to strengthen the role of the Voluntary Sector in local community planning structures through the presentation of a paper recently approved by the North Lanarkshire Partnership Board.

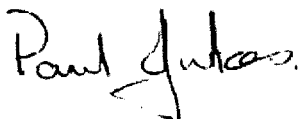
2. Background

2.1 The attached paper (Appendix 1) was approved by the North Lanarkshire Partnership Board on 14th November 2012 and is the result of detailed discussion between Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire and the Community Regeneration & Partnership Team about how the Voluntary Sector can engage more effectively in the localities and support the work of the Local Area Teams.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Local Area Partnership note:

- (i) the content of the report and the processes as described therein
- (ii) a further report will be presented to a future meeting of the partnership



Paul Jukes
Executive Director of Environmental Services

Local Government Access to Information Act: for further information about this report, please contact Martin Dickson on (01698) 302832

17th January 2013

NORTH LANARKSHIRE PARTNERSHIP

Board Meeting - Wednesday 14th November 2012

STRENGTHENING THIRD SECTOR INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING STRUCTURES

1. Background

The purpose of this report is to set out a number of developments that will build upon current practice and approaches to Community Planning in order to strengthen the involvement of the Third Sector within local structures.

Since 2004, the Third Sector has been recognised as a partner within North Lanarkshire Partnership (NLP) with two seats at the Board table. One of these was allocated to the Chair of VANL (previously CVS NL) and the other to an individual representative elected by the sector through a nomination and ballot process on a two yearly cycle. In addition the CEO of VANL attends the NLP Officers' Group and the sector is represented by appropriate senior officers at various thematic working groups within the NLP structure.

At a local level, there has been limited involvement of the Third Sector within local CPP structures over and above the opportunity for Community Fora to provide update reports to Local Area Partnership meetings.

The development of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Group (VSPG) has been important in offering the Voluntary Sector a range of opportunities to have sectoral issues and interests included within wider NLP discussion, debate and dialogue.

Alongside the VSPG, the development of the Locality Networks has further increased connectivity across and between the sector and informed strategic dialogue with the VSPG acting as a conduit for such two-way connectivity and linkage. An important development has been the agreement of an information exchange protocol to encourage the two-way sharing of information between Locality Networks and Local Area Teams.

The emergence of the Community Forum Network and their representation at VSPG has further improved the opportunity to ensure a strengthening of the local voice within strategic planning.

Since April 2010, VANL has existed as the "new" Third Sector Interface within North Lanarkshire with a clear and defined role as specified by the Scottish Government linked to representing the interests of the volunteering and voluntary sector, alongside a challenge to improve connectivity for the sector in respect of Community Planning, at all levels, across North Lanarkshire.

2. Moving Forward

Taking into account all of the very positive learning that the above has brought and against the backdrop of a review of Community Planning approaches and impacts, it is recognised that one area where the North Lanarkshire Partnership could further enhance sectoral connectivity and involvement would be at a local level. Specifically, with regard to representation at Local Area Partnerships and a clearer mechanism to facilitate Voluntary Sector involvement and engagement to deliver a strategic contribution and defined actions within Area Team Action Plans.

The inclusion of “Developing the Partnership” as a key theme within the 2013-2018 Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) requires all partners within Community Planning to review their contribution to the partnership at a strategic and locality level. Through the developmental dialogue that has taken place to produce drafts of the Community Plan and SOA, the strengthening of Voluntary Sector representation and contribution within Local Area Partnerships and Local Area Teams has been identified as a priority over coming months.

Given the role that Scottish Government has included within the Terms of Reference for local Third Sector Interfaces, VANL has been asked to consider how the wider sector could be more effectively engaged within local Community Planning structures. Any involvement will require to be accommodated within already existing mechanisms and should be driven by an aspiration to work alongside the Community Fora who have a clear responsibility in this area, as stated within the NLP Partnership agreements.

Moving forward, VANL would intend to identify and appoint individuals to attend LAP meetings. A clear role specification would be developed – through discussion with Community Planning partners – not least the Community Forum Network. Sectoral representatives would be required to coordinate information sharing between and across the Locality Networks, the VSPG and VANL itself with a view to ensuring a strong, representative and informed voice to the sector.

It is intended to commence a detailed dialogue with the Community Forum Network, along with others during November and December 2012, in order to support the development of the required role specification. Upon completion of this piece of work, the process of identifying appropriate locally connected individuals would take place. This will again be through discussion and dialogue with appropriate partners. It would be expected that locality representatives would be identified and could commence their role at the April 2013 round of LAP meetings. This timeline would coincide with the commencement of the 2013-2018 Community Plan and SOA period and would satisfy the Scottish Government requirements relating to Third Sector Interface undertakings relative to Community Planning.

All of the above requires sensitive and detailed cross-agency dialogue including a number of partners. Discussions have commenced between the VANL CEO and NLC officers responsible for Community Regeneration and Engagement and the direction of travel outlined above is agreed. In taking the recommendations forward, appropriate and detailed dialogue is required with and in respect of the following:

- VANL Board
- VSPG
- Community Forum Network
- NLP Officers' Group
- LAP/LAT Chairs

The process for identifying the representatives will be brought to either the January 2013 or March 2013 Board for consideration, depending on the time taken to carry out consultation.

The Board is asked to approve the proposal that the Voluntary Sector will be represented at Local Area Partnerships from April 2013 subject to an interim report being presented in relation to the process for selection of representatives.

Kenny Moffat
VANL