

North Lanarkshire Council Report

Community Empowerment Committee

approval noting

Ref LMcM/LP/EW

Date 31/01/22

Programme of Work (P084 (6)) Building Community Capacity and Capabilities – Progress Report on the Implementation of a Commissioning Approach (Initial Phase)

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide an update for the Community Empowerment Committee on progress made with work to scope and assess the best approach to strategic investment in and support to the third sector to enable effective partnership work with the sector in delivering outcomes in line with the Plan for North Lanarkshire.

Progress is outlined in terms of work with community planning partners, in particular Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire (VANL), towards securing a more sustainable approach to supporting and resourcing the community and voluntary sector. The current Service Level Agreement and Funding Agreement with Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire has previously been strengthened with a view to better reflect: -

- the development and delivery of Community Boards;
- ensuring the Local Outcome Improvement Plans are supported across the partnership effectively; and
- linked engagement activities are delivered in line with the North Lanarkshire *Framework for Engaging with Communities* and the recent *Delivering for Communities* reports.

The report proposes further exploration for the development of an approach to supporting the Community and Voluntary Sector that begins to test opportunities working towards a shift from a traditional grant making model to one that is built on co-production, community capacity building and local community assets and reflects the needs, aspirations, and circumstances of local communities.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Community Empowerment Committee endorse;

- (1) the identified key areas of work contributing to the development of a more sustainable model for supporting the community and voluntary sector in North Lanarkshire;
- (2) plans to further scope out opportunities to test approaches to funding and resourcing as outlined in section 2.4 of this report; and

- (3) proposals to develop a corporate community wealth building statement.
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The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority	Enhance participation, capacity, and empowerment across our communities
Ambition statement	(20) Improve the involvement of communities in the decisions, and development of services and supports, that affect them

1. Background

- 1.1 In October 2019, Committee approved a report recommending review and exploration of approaches to resourcing of the community and voluntary sector in North Lanarkshire and the development of a North Lanarkshire Community and Voluntary Sector Strategy. In February 2020 Committee noted the completion of the North Lanarkshire Community and Voluntary Sector Strategy 2020/23. An update on progress with implementation of the strategy will be reported under a separate agenda item.
- 1.2 Since then, despite the demands of the Covid 19 pandemic on council services, the community, and voluntary sectors a number of development areas have been progressed that have the potential to improve and build a more collaborative and supportive approach to enhancing the role of the community and voluntary sector. There is no doubt that the challenges associated with the impact of the pandemic have been useful in highlighting the invaluable role of the community and voluntary sector and opportunities have been created to build on lessons learned to strengthen support to the sector and mechanisms for making best use of cross sector resource.
- 1.3 Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire (VANL) play a lead role in supporting the participation and representation of the voluntary sector in Community Planning. It makes sense that communities and local organisations can influence resource decisions based on their local knowledge and contribution to supporting locally agreed priorities. It is important to ensure that approaches to resourcing the sector recognise and are compatible with its diverse nature and harness the known and potential 'added value'. For example, around: -
- flexibility and responsiveness (closeness and accountability to communities, members, users).
 - building social capital;
 - experience and expertise in involving and developing volunteers;
 - ability to reach some of the most marginalised and excluded groups in communities;
 - high levels of trust with service users and the public;
 - knowledge and expertise to address difficult social issues;
 - socially and mission driven;
 - independence (contribution to advocacy, social policy, campaigning, etc.).
 - ability to innovate and attract additional, non-statutory sources of funding
 - positive collaborative partnerships with other community and voluntary organisations and with statutory agencies; and
 - diversity.

2. Report

2.1 Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire - Funding Agreement/Service Level Agreement 2022/23

2.1.1 VANL's draft Service Level Agreement (SLA) and Funding Agreement is attached as Appendix 1. (the 2022/23 Agreement is subject to some final data input by VANL) Committee will recall that from 2021/22 a three-year agreement was approved with reviews to be undertaken annually. An annual performance update from VANL will be reported separately to committee. Recognising the role of the organisation in supporting and coordinating activity that enhances the involvement and capacity of the community and voluntary sector the 2021/22 level of core funding for VANL of £191,550 is retained for 2022/23.

2.1.2 The SLA for 2022/23 also reflects an additional one of payment to VANL of £60,000 related to engagement and co-production with communities and partners to develop a concordat. Further details of this work are provided within a separate report to committee.

2.1.3 The SLA covers: -

- the role of VANL in supporting and delivering on strategic objectives and outcomes linked to the Plan for North Lanarkshire, with reference to, for example, implementation of the Framework for Working with Communities, supporting delivery of the requirements set out in the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, representation and support for the community and voluntary sector and promotion of citizen involvement with a focus on supporting the development of the Community Boards;
- VANL support for effective community engagement and positively contribute to outcomes linked to the Plan for North Lanarkshire;
- The need for VANL to subscribe to joint working arrangements measured through the performance frameworks for the Plan for North Lanarkshire and that out in place to measure the effectiveness of community planning;
- provision of support for effective communication and collaboration with and between local citizens and the community and voluntary sector and the statutory and private sectors; and
- the requirement for VANL to adhere to a series of performance measures.

2.2 Strengthening Support for the Sector

2.2.1 Committee is aware of plans to develop a partnership Community Commissioning Framework to better direct available resource to services and activity that reflects and supports: -

- the current strategic priorities within The Plan for North Lanarkshire;
- the model for Working with Communities and the priorities identified with communities through the development of the 9 Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIP's); and
- the role of key community anchor organisations as catalysts for building community and voluntary sector capacity to support delivery of local community led priorities.

2.2.2 Whilst the intention behind this is still relevant there has been a shift in thinking to focus better on the key building blocks that need to be put in place to improve approaches to resourcing the community and voluntary sector more widely than linked to specific funding. Rather than focussing solely on commissioning which, as outlined later in this report, can be restrictive the aim is to establish effective, accountable, and transparent processes for involving the Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) in the planning, resourcing, and delivery of services. This may eventually involve a shift in approach to funding within an agreed framework and should allow for transition from any current to the intended and longer-term approaches reflecting the complexity and potential fragility of individual organisations given the current financial climate and focus to date on short term resourcing. To date progress has been made in the following areas: -

- principles framework to underpin strategic investment in the NL CVS led by VANL;
- defining 'Community Anchor' organisations as a key support and capacity building mechanism for wider sector activity;
- scoping work to identify opportunities to test a 'community led commissioning approach for council resource;
- early work to develop a Community Concordat to agree expectations, principles and values and guide work between communities, the voluntary and public sector partners under the community planning banner; and
- exploring opportunities to define and better embed community wealth building across key policy and strategy areas.

2.3 Progress

2.3.1 Strategic Investment in North Lanarkshire CVS - Principles Paper

2.3.1.1 Recognising the different operating models and governance and procurement arrangements across community planning partnership agencies as well as the current 'responsive' nature of available funding streams, it would be unrealistic to expect that 'one' approach to funding the sector in the short to medium term is feasible. While this may continue to be a longer-term ambition for North Lanarkshire, engagement with VANL, NHSL and has highlighted that it would be more useful to develop a Community and Voluntary Sector investment framework in the shorter term. This would ensure that an agreed set of principles, parameters and approaches is applied to resource decisions, design, administration, and implementation funding procedures open to the community and voluntary sector in North Lanarkshire. VANL are preparing a first draft of this early in 2022 for finalising with partners with a final draft referred for consideration to the North Lanarkshire Partnership Strategic Leadership Board, Community Empowerment Committee and Community Boards.

2.3.2 Community Anchor Organisations

2.3.2.1 Partnership work between VANL, NLC and NHSNL has placed importance on the role of Community Anchor organisations to act as a main conduit for voluntary and Community activity across a Community Board area. By their definition these types of organisation are likely to have the organisational capacity to benefit from resources available to the voluntary sector but more importantly have local knowledge and skills required to encourage, support and coordinate to make best use of resource across the sector within a geographic area or thematic priority. Broadly a Community Anchor organisation can be defined as:

a voluntary sector organisation that is well-established in their community; with a good understanding of the challenges and opportunities it faces; that is willing and able to coordinate and/ or deliver activities or resources to meet these needs, in partnership with other local organisations and statutory services

2.3.2.2 The role of local community anchor organisations in supporting local resourcing of the sector may be: -

- convening and supporting community organisations to come together to organise themselves in a way that coordinates activity and can make best use of resource opportunities;
- oversight to encourage the linking of proposed activity to existing activity or LOIP priority delivery mechanisms including other Community board sub groups to avoid duplication;
- providing advice and support to organisations and groups submitting funding proposals or requests for support;
- working with Council officers to carry out monitoring of project activity linked to funding as appropriate;
- support organisations and groups to develop sustainability; and
- taking on the role of anchor organisation for wider activity within the relevant area.

2.3.2.3 Defining and considering the role of community anchor organisations has been important and a list of anchor organisations is being compiled. As we move to the next stage of development of proposals for strategic investment in the voluntary sector, engagement with anchor organisations will be crucial

2.4 Scoping Exercise – Options to Develop Community Led Funding Model – Commissioning vs Community Led Grant Making

2.4.1 Discussion to develop this approach to date has focused on the potential for a 'commissioning' approach. The Institute of Commissioning Practitioners defines Commissioning as:

'..securing the services that most appropriately address the needs and wishes of the individual...making use of...intelligence and research and planning accordingly..'

2.4.2 Although emerging good practice in public sector commissioning seeks to involve service users in different ways, traditionally the initiative and power rests with the public institution, rather than with people and communities. A Community Commissioning model lends itself to a more open and empowering approach that puts local communities at the heart of decision making and meets local need. Ultimately how existing resource can be spent on the things that matter for people – and give them a greater role in defining this. Conventional commissioning is often characterised by for example tightly defined services and activities, highly prescriptive processes, and a focus on price rather than social value or prevention. This approach is not always conducive to localised or social action or supporting partnership or coproduction

2.4.3 Evolving Community Commissioning approaches are shifting toward: -

- improved social, environmental, and economic outcomes for the wider community;
- promoting innovation and social action by asking potential service providers to come up with ideas and activities to meet outcomes;
- the long-term vision and improving outcomes through prevention and best use of shared resource and efforts;
- community need, assets, and aspirations and not solely data to understand what action is required;
- co-production of the assessment and decision-making process with communities and in turn about service providers coproducing services with the intended beneficiaries through clear engagement and involvement processes;
- flexibility and use of continuous reflection and evaluation to support adaptive approaches and activity to meet needs; and
- collaboration and promoting strong relationship across and between public, voluntary and community sector.

2.4.4 The proposal for North Lanarkshire is to identify existing funding opportunities that could be scoped out to create a Community led funding model. An in-scope example initially could be an assessment of whether the allocation of the existing Community Grant Award Programme could be used to illustrate how this may work in practice. This could be used to demonstrate to committee an approach that could in time be applied to other Council and partnership funds as required to create opportunities for empowering local communities to act relating to the priorities they set. The approach outlined does not fit neatly with either definition of a commissioning model. The proposed approach is better described as one that is seeking to work collaboratively with the Community and Voluntary sector to deliver services and activities in response to local need and in line with strategic priorities for North Lanarkshire.

2.4.5 The proposed model reflects components of different approaches to working with communities:-

- community commissioning - in that priorities ((linked to LOIP's and/or the Plan for North Lanarkshire) and types of activity may be defined, and local community and voluntary organisations will be able to 'bid' for resource to deliver;
- grant making – in that the detail of proposals will be up to the submitting organisation reflecting their knowledge of the community, their target audience and the subject matter and they will be required to evidence this in their submission;

- co-production – in that both the process and the delivery would encourage coproduction between public, voluntary and community sector;
- participatory budgeting in that criteria will reflect locally identified need based on community engagement and the decision-making process could be part of the Community Board governance arrangements; and
- place making and place planning – criteria, decision making and assessment would reflect locally agreed priorities aligned to the LOIP's.

- 2.4.6 The aim is to develop a partnership programme between North Lanarkshire Council and the local community and voluntary sector. Hypothetically the model could focus on supporting a range of projects and activities that strengthen communities and create opportunities to meet the priorities within The Plan for North Lanarkshire and the 9 LOIP's. Initial work would explore how the current Community Grant Award Programme of approximately of £580,000 could be better invested to fund locality activity to support the LOIP priorities for the 9 Community Board areas
- 2.4.7 This approach could eventually be built into the work of Community Board subgroups to drive Participatory Budgeting. This would make best use of several resources available to community and voluntary sector in an area to meet need based on LOIP's and strategic priorities for the sector in a way that is transparent, and community led but where overall financial governance remains with the council
- 2.4.8 The current Community Grant Award Programme seeks to support community and voluntary organisations contribution to achieving the outcomes for North Lanarkshire. The programme is open to voluntary organisations or community groups operating in North Lanarkshire and may be used for various purposes including employee costs, accommodation costs and programme costs. Organisations can apply for a minimum of £1,000 and a maximum of £50,000 annually. Applications are assessed against criteria aligned to the Plan for North Lanarkshire and key elements of the vision particularly relevant to partnership working and supporting communities.
- 2.4.9 The total allocated for Grant Award applications for 2021/2022 was around £580,000. A separate allocation is ringfenced for the Councils SLA with Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire (VANL) in their role as Third Sector Interface (TSI). For 2021/2022 51 organisations were in receipt of a share of the funding.
- 2.4.10 Whilst this is a relatively small amount of money there is scope to assess the current assessment, decision making and allocation process to do some modelling around different approaches purely initially for illustrative purposes and to explore options. If approved by committee, options and scenarios based on the Grant Award process could be presented to the next committee cycle to inform the development of a framework for future application across several resources available for local activity.
- 2.4.11 Consideration would need to be built into this work around how resource for area wide or thematic activity particularly related to equalities groups would be managed.

2.5 **Community Concordat**

2.5.1 In 2020, it was agreed by the Chief Executives of North and South Lanarkshire Councils and NHS Lanarkshire, that it would be useful to develop a Community Concordat with communities primarily facilitated through the Community and Voluntary Sector to agree shared values and approaches to working together to improve lives through, for example, the effectiveness of North Lanarkshire's Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIPs) and their governance arrangements. Following in-depth discussions during 2020 on a pan-Lanarkshire approach, it was agreed in spring 2021 that the process of developing a community concordat should be undertaken separately through the respective Community Planning Partnerships. However, progress was delayed due to continuing COVID pressures. This work has recently been revisited linked to partnership support for the delivery of the LOIP;s and approaches to supporting strategically the role of the community and voluntary sector in North Lanarkshire. As outlined in a separate and focused report on this matter, VANL are now leading in the development of this work with oversight from the communities team. The proposed approach to developing the concordat is through:

- the "Better Way" initiative, initially developed in England and Wales to date with support from Carnegie UK Trust but now UK-wide given its relevance and application to any locality and partnership; and
- appreciative Inquiry, which is a positive, strengths-focussed approach to helping different groups identify opportunities for improvement, agree priorities and work together to achieve these.

2.5.2 These approaches provide a way to develop a North Lanarkshire Community Concordat, using a value framework as a starting point for 9 locality discussions between citizens, CVS, statutory and business community with the aim of agreeing shared values and approaches.

2.6 **Community Wealth Building**

2.6.1 Community Wealth Building as a concept has been given much national attention and is referenced in several forums within North Lanarkshire and beyond and some areas have developed specific 'community wealth building strategies'. While in North Lanarkshire community wealth building is emerging across a number of workstreams and there is consensus across services that a strategy for wealth building could be counter intuitive. It is proposed that what would be useful in the North Lanarkshire context is: -

- a shared understanding and definition for community wealth building;
- mapping to understand the breadth of work already underway across NL that contributes to wealth building and any further opportunities to enhance ;
- development of a corporate community wealth building statement to be embedded across several policy and strategy areas; and
- potential to report to committee on a range of wealth building activity on an annual basis.

2.6.2 This approach could apply to for example:-

- Social Economy Strategy development;
- Community Benefits;
- Participatory Budgeting;

- Procurement; and
- Tackling poverty and inequality.

2.6.3 It is proposed that a short life working group from across key services should be brought together to progress with these actions

3. Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty

3.1 Fairer Scotland Duty

3.1.1 An integrated Fairer Scotland Duty/EIA was completed at the outset of the development of the commissioning model and will be informed by further consultation as the overall commissioning strategy develops.

3.2 Equality Impact Assessment

3.2.1 An integrated Fairer Scotland Duty/EIA was completed at the outset of the development of the commissioning model and will be informed by further consultation as the overall commissioning strategy develops.

4. Impact

4.1 Financial impact

4.1.1 As set out in section 2 of this report.

4.2 HR policy / Legislative impact

4.2.1 None arising specifically from the work described in this report.

4.3 Technology / Digital impact

4.3.1 None arising specifically from the work described in this report

4.4 Environmental impact

4.4.1 None arising specifically from the work described in this report.

4.5 Communications impact

4.5.1 A bespoke communications and engagement plan will be prepared to promote community involvement in the development of the concordat.

4.6 Risk impact

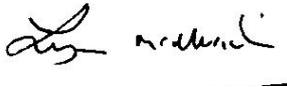
4.6.1 The SLA with Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire supports the Council in meeting not only the requirements of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 but also enhances the Council's approach to Community Engagement.

5. Measures of success

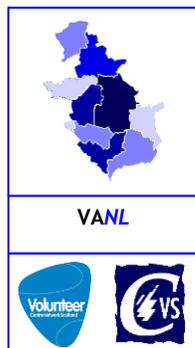
- 5.1 VANL support the Community & Voluntary Sector to make a full contribution to delivery of the Plan for North Lanarkshire and associated Programme of Work.
- 5.2 Implementation of a commissioning/community led funding model approach in line with the Plan for North Lanarkshire Programme of Work.

6. Supporting documents

- 6.1 Appendix 1: VANL Service Level Agreement 2022/23.



Lizanne McMurrich
Head of Communities



Service Level Agreement

between

North Lanarkshire Council

represented by

Enterprise and Communities

and

Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire

Core Funding April 2021- March 2024 (with annual review)

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Appendix Five: VANL Resources

1. Purpose and Duration of Agreement

- 1.1 This Service Level Agreement (SLA) between North Lanarkshire Council (NLC) sets out the services to be provided by Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire (VANL) which is the Third Sector Interface (TSI) for North Lanarkshire.
- 1.2 Performance against the service specification will be reviewed annually in February with the detail of the work set out in Appendix 3 updated as required.
- 1.3 The expectation is that, subject to satisfactory performance and the availability of funding, VANL will receive funding to deliver its obligations under this agreement until March 2024 after which a new three-year agreement will be considered.

2. Service Specification (see Appendix 3 for detailed activities mapped against Plan for North Lanarkshire)

VANL will support a green and inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in NL by assisting with delivery of the Plan for North Lanarkshire and the Framework for Working with Communities. VANL will achieve this through collaborative working with community and voluntary organisations, NLC and other NLP partners to support the following. VANL delivers the following services supported by core funding from NLC (and also supported by core funding from Scottish Government Third Sector Unit).

2.1 Development and support for the nine Community Boards and associated community engagement activities to support development and delivery of the 9 local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIP's)

2.2 Action on NLP and NLC priority themes including climate emergency; digital inclusion; tackling poverty; mental health and wellbeing

2.3 Assisting the NL Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) (including social enterprises) to support delivery of the Plan for North Lanarkshire through:

- assessing CVS needs, priorities and challenges,
- providing capacity building and funding support- working with NLC colleagues and others
- helping the CVS to assess their contribution and impact more effectively
- facilitating CVS voice and influence through community planning and other partnerships

- supporting wider understanding and appreciation of the role and contribution of the CVS.

2.4 Developing and supporting volunteering across NL in collaboration with the CVS and NLP partners – to strengthen the contribution of volunteers to delivering the Plan for North Lanarkshire.

3. NLC Core Funding for VANL

3.1 Core NLC funding for VANL from NLC for 2022-23 will be £191,532.50

3.2 This core funding is or may be supplemented by additional project funding agreed on a case-by-case basis from NLC. (See Appendix Five.)

3.3 VANL will be able to book NLC facilities free of charge for its meetings and events.

3.4 It is expected that subject to satisfactory performance and availability of resources, the above funding for VANL will continue until March 2024 with annual review. If a reduction in this funding, VANL shall be advised at the earliest opportunity (at least 90 days' notice) and this service specification will be adapted accordingly.

3.5 In addition to the core funding that VANL receives, a one-off allocation of £60,000, will be paid for 2022-23 to support a Project Co-ordinator employed by VANL for 12 months and two independent Appreciative Inquiry Facilitators commissioned and managed by VANL. This is to facilitate community and stakeholder engagement and development work associated with the creation of a Concordat with communities. This post and activity will be managed by VANL on behalf of the Council. This will be paid in line with the payment schedule for VANL's core funding.

4. Conditions

4.1 General Conditions

4.1.1 The Council's liability shall be to make payment of the funding to the organisation. All other liabilities or claims are the responsibility of the organisation.

4.1.2 The Council is responsible for ensuring that any funding provided is correctly used and so payment of any monies will be made by the Council in terms of the conditions listed within this document.

4.1.3 The Council will inform the funded organisation of any changes in funding regulations that may have a bearing on any financial support offered or any of the funded activities.

4.1.4 Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire undertakes and agrees to adhere to the conditions within this document and further conditions as provided for by the council.

4.1.5 The funding provided may only be used for the purpose (or purposes) specified within this document and any unused grant should be returned to the Council.

4.1.6 Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire shall notify the council immediately of any material change to the organisation or to the activities and/or services provided including any change to the office bearers and any changes of address of existing office bearers.

4.1.7 Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire has a responsibility to report any suspicions of impropriety, fraud and irregularity to the council as soon as they come to light. Organisations should not wait for the outcome of investigations before reporting such matters. Any suspicions should be made known to the council. Failure to do so may be considered a breach of the conditions of funding.

4.1.8 In entering this agreement, it is understood that anyone convicted of fraud should not stand as an office bearer for the organisation. The council should be notified immediately if this is not the case or if this changes at some point during the funding period.

4.1.9 Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire undertakes to inform the council if at any time the intention is to dissolve the organisation or if it has not held a management meeting for six months.

4.1.10 In the case of dissolution, the organisation must ensure that the procedures laid down within its constitution are complied with and that the council are informed in advance of any meetings held to action or discuss dissolution of the organisation. The organisation undertakes to return to the council any unspent grant monies and/or movable items purchased through grant monies.

4.1.11 The funding from the council to the organisation is dependent upon successful progress towards achieving the agreed outcomes and performance measures. Any unused grant should be returned to the Council.

4.1.12 The project must be free of any political bias and must not involve political campaigning.

4.1.13 The construction, validity, performance and all other matters arising out of and in connection with these conditions of funding shall be governed by the Laws of Scotland.

5.2 Compliance with Statutory Requirements

5.2.1 The provision of funding from the council is conditional on compliance with any current legislation governing the conduct of the organisation in receipt of funding including: -

- The Companies Act 2006 (for incorporated bodies);
- The Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and The Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (for registered charities);
- The General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (for anyone holding personal data), and
- Protecting vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 (for anyone working with children or vulnerable adults).

5.2.2 The Equality Act 2010: Public Sector Equality Duty - although the onus of this Act is on public bodies, the Council requires that the organisations it funds should also pay due regard to the General Duty it outlines by noting the need to: -

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not, and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

5.3 Operational Procedures

5.3.1 Conflict of interest - in making decisions which involve public money (which council funding is) it is imperative that all decisions are made in the public interest (and are seen to be made in the public interest) and not in the interests of any individual. All members of the organisation's management group should declare any relevant personal interests that they have before any discussion takes place on a subject. Having done so they should take no part in the discussions and should have no influence on the decisions made, and this should be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. Individuals should be regarded as having an interest (financial or otherwise) in an activity or in the provision of an activity if: -

- Any spouse, partner or close relative has an interest in it;
- Any company of which he or she is a director, substantial shareholder or employee has an interest in it, or
- Any organisation of which he or she is a management committee member, trustee, employee, voluntary worker or elected representative has an interest in it.
- Complaints - the funded organisation shall provide and maintain a complaints procedure acceptable to the council and a copy of this shall be available to people using the activity. In accordance with its own complaints procedure the organisation will maintain a complaint register which will be made available to council officers on request.

5.3.2 Employee Procedures - funded organisations and groups are required to recruit, employ and manage staff in a manner which is in line with their own equal opportunities policy and does not support any activity which is discriminatory.

5.3.3 Governance - in entering into this agreement the council expects the funded organisation to comply with relevant and current proper management procedures for voluntary organisations.

5.3.4 Insurance cover – Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire undertakes to properly insure all items and activities undertaken by this organisation. It further undertakes to indemnify the council from all costs and liability arising from its activities and from all claims at the instance of third parties which would not have arisen had this agreement not been entered into.

5.3.5 Purchasing principles - all purchases, equipment and/or services paid for through council funding must remain under the ownership of the funded organisation and backed up with receipts. The organisation may be asked to submit these receipts as proof of expenditure and so should retain these for at least 2 years along with all financial records relating to the council funding and its subsequent expenditure. These financial records and any equipment purchased should be made available for inspection by Council Officers if requested. Procurement should be through open competition unless there are exceptional and convincing reasons to the contrary. Goods and services should be selected on the basis of value for money. A minimum of 3 tenders/quotations are required and sealed bid procedures should be used for all purchases in excess of £10,000 and for any lower-value, but potentially contentious purchases.

5.4 Ownership of Assets

5.4.1 Unless otherwise agreed with the council, all land, buildings and moveable property with a value of £50,000 or more purchased with the aid of a council grant shall be owned by the council and shall not be disposed of during the funding period of the activity without consent of the council. In some cases, for example if the activity terminates prematurely, approval of the council to dispose of the assets will be required, and income from the disposal may need to be returned to North Lanarkshire Council. Where the ownership of such assets is not to rest with the council, then the approval of the council is required before they are purchased.

5.4.2 Where land, buildings and moveable assets purchased with the aid of a council grant is worth less than £50,000, it is for the council to decide who should own the asset. If the ownership is to rest with someone other than the council, then it is the funded organisations responsibility to take steps to ensure that full value for money is achieved in the management of the assets in question and in realising the full value of all surplus assets.

5.5 Termination of Agreement

The council may terminate or suspend the grant funding if any of the following events occur:

- The discovery of financial irregularities within the organisation
- The discovery that the applicant organisation or its representatives have made material misrepresentations in the funding process
- Failure to comply with council monitoring and evaluation processes
- Use of grant funding for non-approved purposes
- Insolvency of the applicant organisation
- Material breach of these conditions.

Signatories to the Service Level Agreement

Signed on behalf of Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire ...

.....

Date

Signed on behalf of North Lanarkshire Council
Communities Team

.....

Date

Appendix One: Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire

1. Introduction

VANL is the recognised support organisation for the Community and Voluntary sector in North Lanarkshire [also known as a “Third Sector Interface” (TSI)] with formal recognition by the Scottish Government. VANL is:

- **The recognised support organisation for the NL CVS as a whole**

VANL provides essential capacity building and other support to community and voluntary organisations across North Lanarkshire. There are an estimated 1,500 diverse community and voluntary organisations in NL ranging from small community groups supported only by volunteers; registered charities of differing sizes, many with staff and volunteers; social enterprises including housing associations and co-operatives.

- **The lead volunteering support organisation in NL**

Thousands of local people of all ages volunteer across NL each year, providing support to local people and communities. VANL promotes volunteering to help increase the numbers of volunteers in NL; supports volunteer-involving organisations; and supports matching of volunteers to volunteer roles. VANL also convenes the NL Volunteering Partnership to support cross-sector collaboration to strengthen volunteering, including employer-supported volunteering.

- **A community planning partner on behalf of the NL CVS**

VANL supports CVS engagement in all aspects of community planning, including Community Boards, Strategic Leadership Board. VANL also supports CVS contribution to the Plan for North Lanarkshire.

VANL’s charitable objectives, vision, mission, values, strategic objectives and outcomes – which are set out below and are the basis of our Strategic Plan for 2021-24 - support delivery of the Plan for North Lanarkshire’s ambitions. (Please see Appendix 3.)

2. Charitable objectives

- Advance citizenship and community development, including rural and urban regeneration, the promotion of civic responsibility and the voluntary sector and the effectiveness of charitable/voluntary/community organisations.
- Strive to promote benefits for the residents of North Lanarkshire; in particular, the advancement of education, the furtherance of health and the relief of poverty, sickness and distress by the promotion of voluntary service and developing volunteering within the local area.

3. Vision and Mission

3.1 VANL's vision is a thriving and effective community and voluntary sector in North Lanarkshire which supports local people's quality of life and well-being

3.2 VANL's Mission is to: improve the quality of life and wellbeing of North Lanarkshire's citizens by fostering dynamic, inclusive communities through promotion and support for volunteering and the development of the voluntary and community sector.

4. Values

VANL is a values-based organisation. Our approach to and delivery of our work is underpinned by our commitment to the following values.

4.1 Sustainable Quality of Life and Well-being

VANL promotes and supports sustainable quality of life and well-being of North Lanarkshire's people and communities, across environmental, economic and social issues.

4.2 Equality and Human Rights

VANL promotes and advances equality and human rights for the people of North Lanarkshire.

4.3 Empowerment

VANL supports local people, communities and voluntary organisations to have voice and influence over the issues that matter to them, including the economy, jobs and income; housing; health and care services; transport; and the built and natural environment.

4.4 Collaboration and Partnership

VANL is committed to working effectively with other organisations and individuals from all sectors to achieve shared goals which benefit the people and communities of North Lanarkshire.

4.5 Respect and Care for Others

VANL shows and fosters respect and consideration for the people and communities of North Lanarkshire; the community and voluntary sector; our statutory and business partners; and all those that work for and with VANL.

4.6 Commitment to Excellence

VANL is committed to enabling a culture of learning, improvement and innovation within VANL, the community and voluntary sector and the partnerships of which we are part - seeking to deliver high standards of work and achieve positive outcomes.

4. Strategic Objectives and Outcomes

4.1 Funding and Resources for the North Lanarkshire Community and Voluntary Sector

Strategic Objective: VANL will work with the community and voluntary sector to clarify, communicate and fulfil their resource requirements to enable them to respond to local need more effectively. Specifically, VANL will:

- support North Lanarkshire community and voluntary sector organisations to diversify their income sources, including grant funding from sources outside North Lanarkshire; public fundraising; corporate sponsorship; and trading
- promote citizens' involvement in their community through volunteering
- promote employer-supported volunteering
- work with North Lanarkshire community and voluntary sector and statutory sector to develop improved support for the community and voluntary sector paid and volunteer workforce
- work with North Lanarkshire Council, other statutory partners and the community and voluntary sector to review local grant funding, procurement and access to community resources to identify and progress improvements.

Outcomes:

- North Lanarkshire community and voluntary organisations have improved understanding of current and future funding opportunities and community resources due to the assistance provided by VANL.
- North Lanarkshire community and voluntary sector paid workforce is better supported and feel more valued due to the support provided by VANL.
- More employers in North Lanarkshire support employee volunteering due to the work of VANL.

- Volunteering involving organisations feel better supported to recruit and support effective volunteers due to the support provided by VANL.

4.2 Guidance and Training for the North Lanarkshire Community and Voluntary Sector

Strategic Objective: VANL will provide and facilitate provision of guidance, support and training to NL's community and voluntary sector so they are more able to respond to local needs effectively and evidence their contribution and impact.

Outcome: North Lanarkshire community and voluntary organisations have greater confidence in their ability and capacity to deliver their work effectively and assess their contribution and impact due to the guidance and assistance provided by VANL.

4.3 Effective Communication and Collaboration

Strategic Objective: VANL will support effective communication and collaboration with and between local citizens and the community and voluntary sector and the statutory and private sectors. Achievement of this objective will be facilitated through:

- information sharing and consultation – online and through events
- community and voluntary sector networks and fora, including Community Boards
- cross-sector partnerships
- “co-production” (design, planning and delivery) of specific activities, interventions, programmes and projects, involving citizens, community and voluntary, statutory and private sector organisations.

4.4 Effective Engagement and Influence of the North Lanarkshire Community and Voluntary Sector

Strategic Objectives:

- VANL will support effective engagement and positive influence of the North Lanarkshire's community and voluntary sector over the North Lanarkshire Partnership's "Plan for North Lanarkshire" and the linked strategies and policies which support delivery of the Plan's five high-level ambitions:
 - Improve economic opportunities and outcomes.
 - Support all children and young people to realise their full potential.
 - Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities.
 - Improve the ability, participation, and empowerment of our communities.
 - Improve North Lanarkshire's resource base.

- VANL will support North Lanarkshire's community and voluntary sector to evaluate and report on how they contribute to achievement of the five ambitions of the Plan for North Lanarkshire. (Please see supporting document presented separately in Appendix Three.)

Outcomes for 4.3 and 4.4:

- VANL's assistance has helped to improve cross-sector understanding and appreciation of the role and contribution of North Lanarkshire's community and voluntary sector and volunteering.

- Key stakeholders in the CVS and statutory sectors consider that VANL has helped to improve collaboration between the CVS and statutory sectors especially in relation to key partnerships:
 - the North Lanarkshire Partnership
 - Children's Services Partnership
 - Health and Social Care North Lanarkshire.

- Assistance from VANL has improved the capacity of the CVS to demonstrate their contribution to achievement of the Plan for North Lanarkshire.

5. Performance and Impact

VANL is committed to being an effective organisation, delivering work of high quality which seeks to achieve desired outcomes. This commitment is facilitated through sound leadership, financial and people management, monitoring and evaluation, learning and continuous improvement arrangements.

VANL is an accredited [Investors in People organisation, achieving gold level recognition](#) in its most recent accreditation in 2021 with feedback that we were close to a Platinum level accreditation, which is the highest level an organisation can reach. VANL expects to achieve platinum by 2023.

VANL's approach to being an effective organisation is informed by guidance in two performance frameworks for non-profit organisations:

- the UK [Charity Excellence Framework](#)
- and the Scottish [Lasting Difference Framework](#)

During 2022, VANL will also assess its performance against the [Charity Excellence Quality Mark](#)

VANL staff capture and review relevant performance data including relevant activity data (inputs and outputs) and outcomes as set out above. (VANL's outcomes also relate to the Scottish Government outcomes for Third Sector Interfaces.)

VANL will provide North Lanarkshire Council with six-month interim progress reports in autumn each year, focussing on activities and a 12-month Impact and Learning report in summer each year, which will include activity and outcome data. VANL will also communicate its progress and achievements more widely.

Appendix Two: Support Needs of North Lanarkshire Community and Voluntary Sector: Findings from 2019 and 2020

VANL identifies NL's community and voluntary sector support needs and priorities through ongoing engagement and regular consultation with the NL CVS, which informs both the NL CVS Strategy and VANL's linked Strategic Plan.

The service specification set out in this agreement is informed by VANL's consultations with the NL CVS during spring 2019 and summer 2020, with the 2020 consultation focussed on COVID 19 experience and recovery support needs. (Findings from our spring 2021 survey will be available by June 2021.)

Both 2019 and 2020 consultations involved online surveys. The 2019 survey had just under 130 responses with the 2020 survey just under 160. The 2019 consultation was also supported by discussion at six locality meetings involving over 100 participants. As a result of these consultations, the following needs and priorities were identified.

1. Improved funding and resources

- Grant funding levels for the community and voluntary sector need to reflect real costs of delivery and funding awards should be for at least three years.
- More support is needed to help the community and voluntary sector secure income from other sources.
- The community and voluntary sector's workforce need better terms and conditions and improved workplace wellbeing support.
- The voluntary workforce needs to be strengthened.
- The community and voluntary sector need access to affordable or free community venues.

2. Improved guidance and training

North Lanarkshire's CVS need continuing provision of guidance and training on organisational development and other issues including:

- strategy and planning
- income generation
- partnership working, communications and influencing
- community engagement
- ICT/digital
- leadership and governance

- innovation, improvement and evaluation
- people management
- workplace wellbeing and health and safety
- equality, human rights and public protection
- understanding of key population groups and key issues such as poverty, mental health etc.

3. Effective participation, voice and influence

The community and voluntary sector must be treated as equal and respected partners within North Lanarkshire's community planning partnership – North Lanarkshire Partnership (NLP) – and other linked partnerships such as Children's Services Partnership and Health and Social Care North Lanarkshire, with more collaborative and co-production approaches.

4. Improved communication

There needs to be more effective and accessible communication between the CVS, VANL and statutory organisations, including more opportunities to be updated and consulted; provide feedback; share good practice and explore and resolve challenges.

5. Improved recognition and understanding

The achievements and benefits of volunteering and the CVS sector need to be celebrated within the sector and promoted more effectively across North Lanarkshire's statutory sector and to the public.

Appendix Three: Rationale and Context

1. Rationale

1.1 Empowered and engaged citizens – local people - are vital to healthy societies and democracy and to a thriving community and voluntary sector given they:

- have the right to contribute to discussion and decisions about public policy and services through voting and ongoing engagement through appropriate processes and forums, such as community planning
- pay for public and community and voluntary sector services through taxation and donations
- rely on public and community and voluntary sector services for their quality of life and well being
- contribute to their communities through volunteering
- provide most of the care for children and young people, for disabled people, older adults and others needing support.

1.2. The community and voluntary sector in North Lanarkshire is diverse and includes:

- local community groups, many run entirely by volunteers, often with little funding and often not registered as a charity
- small, medium and larger charities, some of which are local branches of national charities, usually employing staff and assisted by volunteers and relying on regular and adequate funding, some of which may come from trading – one of NL's largest charities is New College Lanarkshire
- social enterprises – that is not-for-profit businesses providing a socially useful products and/or services, for example housing associations and co-operatives

1.3. A vibrant, dynamic and effective CVS in North Lanarkshire is vital as it makes essential and valued contributions to people lives and society by:

- providing support and services to local people that protect and promote quality of life and well-being, including:
 - cultural activities – for example community arts’ activities
 - digital inclusion support through training and access to devices and data
 - employability and financial inclusion support - including training for employment; money advice through CABs and community advice centres; affordable credit through credit unions
 - housing provision and support for homeless people
 - social care and support, including advocacy; befriending; community transport; food support; home and personal care; therapeutic and recovery support for people with mental health and addiction problems
 - healthy living support including nutrition and physical activity
 - learning provision including adult education
 - social and sporting activities through groups for children, young people and adults of all ages
- protecting the natural environment, including greening and conservation initiatives and action to reduce carbon emissions.
- providing employment and volunteering opportunities for local people.
- contributing to public discussion and decisions about local communities and public policies and services.

1.4. The community and voluntary sector in North Lanarkshire benefits from the guidance and support provided by VANL, which helps them to:

- secure funding
- lead, govern and manage their organisations well and achieve their goals more effectively
- understand and influence improvements to local public strategies, policies and services
- collaborate with each other and with the public and private sector to achieve more

2. Context

2.1 North Lanarkshire

- 2.1.1 North Lanarkshire is the fourth largest local authority area in Scotland with a population of nearly 340,000. NL has many deprived communities - with 63 localities in the top 10% of areas of multiple deprivation in Scotland – resulting in significant health inequalities, including premature death and long-term health problems. The COVID 19 pandemic has added to these significant health challenges, with risk of contracting the virus, experiencing more severe illness and even death greater in deprived communities.
- 2.1.2 Pressure on public sector budgets since 2008 has led to reductions in overall expenditure on public services and reduced funding for the community and voluntary sector from the public sector. These pressures have increased due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- 2.1.3 Despite these significant challenges, there is a strong commitment by the public and community and voluntary sectors in North Lanarkshire to work together effectively to improve quality of life, well-being and equality for residents, utilising North Lanarkshire's assets which include the following.
- A strategic location in central Scotland with good transport links, affordable land and housing, providing a prime location for local businesses and people and for businesses and people wishing to relocate.
 - Excellent employability support, helping local people find work.
 - Access to valued green and leisure resources, including Strathclyde Country Park, Kilsyth Hills and the Forth and Clyde Canal.
 - Many excellent public services, despite financial pressures.
 - Continuing – albeit reduced - funding of North Lanarkshire's community and voluntary sector through grants and service contracts from North Lanarkshire Council and Health and Social Care North Lanarkshire Partnership and continuing funding for Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire through core and programme funding.

- A rich and diverse community and voluntary sector providing valued support and services to local people – VANL currently has over 1,700 active community and voluntary organisations on its database. VANL will review and update this data annually.
- A strong volunteering culture:
 - the Scottish Household Survey 2016 -17 reported that 27% of adults in North Lanarkshire (about 75,000 people) volunteered formally through an organisation or group, contributing 7 million hours of formal volunteering, equating to £102 million to the local economy
 - during 2019-20 for example, VANL processed 1,373 Saltire Award certificates.

2.1.4 The “Plan for North Lanarkshire” (PforNL) was launched to the community and voluntary sector at its annual conference on the 4th of June 2019. The PforNL is a high-level strategic plan for all community planning partners in NL including NLC; NHS Lanarkshire; Police Scotland; Fire and Rescue Scotland; Scottish Enterprise; New College Lanarkshire; and VANL on behalf of the wider community and voluntary sector.

2.1.5 The PforNL has the following five high-level ambitions, which provide a framework for improving lives of the residents.

- Improve economic opportunities and outcomes.
- Support all children and young people to realise their full potential.
- Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities.
- Improve the ability, participation, and empowerment of our communities.
- Improve North Lanarkshire’s resource base.

Appendix Four provides an overview of the contribution of NL’s Community and Voluntary Sector and VANL to these ambitions and VANL’s contribution.

2.2 National Context

The national Scottish context for NL's community and voluntary sector and VANL includes a wide range of positive and supportive policies and resources such as:

- policy and resources to support the COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery
- The National Performance Framework (NPF), which includes commitments to inclusive and sustainable economic growth, human rights and equality and empowered people and communities.
- endorsement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which focus on eliminating poverty, protecting bio-diversity and the natural world and tackling climate change
- climate change legislation and Climate Action Plan with requirements for Scotland to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2045 and support an inclusive and green recovery from COVID-19
- a cross-government commitment to the protection of and promotion of human rights and equality, underpinned by Scottish, UK and international law
- the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 which supports active citizenship through the right for communities to own assets, participatory budgeting and involvement in community planning.
- local governance review
- integration of health and social care
- Scottish Government funding and support for Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs). (VANL is the TSI for North Lanarkshire and receives funding from the Scottish Government to support this role.)
- a national social enterprise strategy which promotes growth of local, community based and led social enterprises.

Appendix Four: Plan for North Lanarkshire Ambitions and Contribution of Community and Voluntary Sector and VANL

Plan for NL Ambitions	NL Community and Voluntary Sector Contribution	VANL Contribution
<p>1. Improve economic opportunities and outcomes</p> <p>1.1 Ensure a housing mix that supports social inclusion and economic growth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social housing provision (Housing Assoc. and Co-ops) • Tenant and Resident empowerment • Housing support (housing with social care) • Housing and money advice (CABs/NL Advice and Information Network) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VANL has an indirect role in supporting housing issues through our joint working with NLC and NHS Health Improvement staff to facilitate community engagement in the development of 9 Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIPs), which will include housing issues. • VANL already has links with CVS organisations providing social housing; housing support; and housing and money advice, including support for homeless people. VANL plans to strengthen these links from early 2021 and encourage housing-related CVS organisations to contribute more to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the NL-wide CVS Partnership Group ○ and NL-wide CVS networks such as the Children, Young People and Families Network, Climate Emergency Network and Mental Health and Wellbeing Network.

Plan for NL Ambitions	NL Community and Voluntary Sector Contribution	VANL Contribution (Also see all other sections)
<p>1.2 Refocus our town centres and communities to be multi-functional connected places which maximise social, economic, and environmental opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating in 9 Community Boards. • Supporting development and delivery of 9 Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIPs) • Running community centres and facilities, with growing interest in asset transfer. • Providing services through community and voluntary groups and forums. • Providing employment and supporting volunteering. • Providing community transport and advocating for improved public transport in NL. • Promoting and protecting green space and nature conservation. 	<p>NLP - Community Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VANL staff work closely with NLC staff and NHS Lanarkshire Health Improvement staff through joint working arrangements to support the 9 Community Boards and development and delivery of 9 LOIPs. • VANL’s staff will work with local CVS and NLC to support asset transfer. • CEO plays the lead role in facilitating development and delivery of NLP’s Strategic Leadership Board’s (SLB) Climate Action Plan – “ACT Now” - working with partners, VANL’s staff, NL CVS and local communities. The focus of ACT Now is to support an inclusive and green recovery from C19. <p>NL Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VANL staff support community and voluntary groups in each of the 9 community planning localities and across NL to help them support community regeneration and improvements by providing guidance and training on a wide range of “organisational development” issues including funding, governance, ICT and HR. • VANL also supports development of Social Enterprise in NL through active contributions to the NL cross-sector Social Enterprise Strategy Group convened by NLC’s Enterprise Team; support for CVS organisations wishing to develop trading activities; and support for the NL Social Enterprise Network. • VANL convenes, co-ordinates and supports the NL CVS Employability Network, which supports CVS organisations providing employability support in NL to share information, provide peer support, develop joint initiatives and influence local and national policy. • VANL has partnered with Routes to Work to support a NL CVS Kickstart consortia scheme to assist youth employment. <p>Also see section 5.3 on volunteering workforce.</p>

Plan for NL Ambitions	NL Community and Voluntary Sector Contribution	VANL Contribution (Also see all other sections)
<p>1.3 Maximise the use of our marketable land and assets through improved development in business and industrial infrastructure</p> <p>1.4</p> <p>1.5 Market and promote North Lanarkshire as the place to live, learn, work, invest, and visit</p>	n/a	n/a
<p>1.5 Grow and improve the sustainability and diversity of North Lanarkshire's economy</p>	<p>Current:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employability and inclusive employment • Provision of services and goods, including social enterprises <p>From early 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of and contribution to inclusive and green economic development to support implementation of the ACT Now plan. 	See section 1.2.

Plan for NL Ambitions	NL Community and Voluntary Sector Contribution	VANL Contribution (Also see sections 1.2 and 2.)
<p>2. Support all children and young people to realise their full potential.</p> <p>2.1 Raise attainment and skills for learning, life, and work to enhance opportunities and choices.</p> <p>2.2 Enhance collaborative working to maximise support and ensure all our children and young people are included, supported, and safe.</p> <p>2.3 Engage children and families in early learning and childcare programmes and making positive transitions to school.</p> <p>2.4 Invest in early interventions, positive transitions, and preventative approaches to improve outcomes for children and young people.</p> <p>2.5 Engage with children, young people, parents, carers, and families to help all children and young people reach their full potential.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of support to children, young people and families through activities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Befriending and mentoring ○ Child-care and play groups ○ Food support, including emergency food; cooking skills; nutritional advice ○ Mental health support ○ Money advice and affordable credit ○ Parenting and family support ○ Physical activity/sports ○ Social housing and housing support ○ Children’s clubs and youth groups • Contribution to partnership working for children, young people and families through Children Services Partnership Task Groups and locality work, including working with and through NLC’s Education and Families Dept, including school clusters. This includes supporting development, delivery and evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ enrichment activities for second year pupils ○ community-based support for CYP mental health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VANL’s CEO is a member of the Children Services Partnership Board and linked Improving Children’s Services Group supported by other CVS engagement through members of the NL CVS Children, Young People (CYPF) and Families Network. This supports CVS contribution to Children Services Planning and delivery. • VANL receives project funding through HSCNL Community Solutions programme to employ a specialist CYPF Development officer who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ convenes, co-ordinates and supports the NL CVS CYPF Network which supports members to share information, provide peer support, develop joint work and influence local policy and practice ○ supports network members to work together and with the statutory sector on key issues, including C19 response; children’s rights; child mental health; child poverty; child protection; infant nutrition; family support. • VANL’s CEO, Community Solutions Manager and CYPF Development Officer are supporting CVS organisation to deliver community based mental health support to CYP working closely with school clusters and the Community Solutions locality consortia. • VANL’s other development staff support the NL CVS in the 9 community planning localities to support action on the above CYPF issues.

Plan for NL Ambitions	NL Community and Voluntary Sector Contribution	VANL Contribution (Also see sections 1.2 and 2.)
<p>3. Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities.</p> <p>3.1 Increase economic opportunities for adults by understanding, identifying, and addressing the causes of poverty and deprivation and barriers to financial inclusion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment, often at or above real living wage • Employability support • Money advice, including benefits advice, debt advice, budgeting etc. • Affordable Credit through Credit Unions. • Contribution to delivery of NLC's Tackling Poverty strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VANL's CEO is a member of NLC Tackling Poverty Task and Finish Group and also a member of the NL Tackling Poverty Officers Group. VANL's CYPF Development Officer and reps from several CVS organisations are also members of the Officers' Group. This participation supports partnership planning on tackling poverty issues and CVS contribution across NL. • VANL supports selected CVS organisations to deliver COVID-19 financial insecurity payments to vulnerable groups in liaison with the NLC Financial Inclusion Team. (This may end in April 2021.) • VANL's development staff support the NL CVS in the 9 community planning localities to contribute to action to tackle poverty, working with Champions Boards and statutory partners. • In spring-summer 2021, VANL will survey the NL CVS to assess the sector's current contribution to tackling poverty and support the sector to maintain and where possible strengthen this, given the CVS's contribution to tackling poverty will be even more critical due to the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic.

Plan for NL Ambitions	NL Community and Voluntary Sector Contribution	VANL Contribution (Also see all other sections)
<p>3.2 Ensure our residents are able to achieve, maintain, and recover their independence through appropriate supports at home and in their communities.</p> <p>3.3 Improve preventative approaches including self-management and giving people information and choice over supports and services</p> <p>3.4 Ensure the highest standards of public protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy • Befriending and mentoring • Carer support (direct and indirect) • Community Transport and Active Travel • Food and nutrition support • Lunch clubs • Promotion of mental well-being and recovery support for people with mental health problems and addictions • Public protection - training and effective practice. • Physical activity • Provision of information, advice and self-management support. • Provision of community care services • Support for children, young people and families • Support for disabled people • Support for older people • Support for people with dementia 	<p>COVID 19 Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VANL provides direct assistance to the NL CVS by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ assessing their COVID-19 response and recovery support needs through surveys and regular liaison. ○ providing accurate and timely digital information and guidance through our website, enews and social media platforms. ○ providing funding guidance ○ assisting funders with assessments of NL CVS funding applications. ○ securing additional funding on behalf of the CVS to facilitate improvements on issues such as community food support, digital inclusion and remote befriending. ○ recruiting and matching volunteers to COVID-19 related volunteer roles within both the NL CVS and statutory sectors. ○ capturing data on NL CVS COVID-19 support and providing reports • VANL also works with NLC and NHS Lanarkshire to support cross-sector planning co-ordination and facilitation of support to vulnerable groups during the COVID-19 pandemic and to aid recovery as follows. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As a member of the NLP COVID-19 Community Response Bronze Group (○ As a member of the Lanarkshire Resilience Partnership ○ As a member of the COVID-19 Community Food Working Group ○ Through joint working with NLC and NHSL staff in the 9 Community Planning localities, including supporting Community Boards and LOIPs. ○ Through hosting and management of the Health and Social Care NL Community Solutions Programme (see below). ○ As a member of the NL CVS Recovery, Renewal and Strategic Investment Group (see section 5 below).

Plan for NL Ambitions	NL Community and Voluntary Sector Contribution	VANL Contribution (Also see all other sections)
Sections 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 cont.	See above	<p>Community Solutions Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VANL hosts and manages the NL Community Solutions (CS) Programme, which has over £1.2 million funding from Health and Social Care NL (HSCNL) and some additional project funding from several other sources. • Most of the CS funding is used to fund six locality anchor organisations to act as local CS support organisations and 30 thematic projects on issues indicated to the left. These funded organisations and projects play a key role in COVID-19 response and recovery. • VANL also receives some CS project funding to help deliver work on children, young people and families (see section 2) and volunteering (see above and sections 1.2 and 5) • VANL receives some CS funding to cover our hosting and management costs. • In addition to managing the funded CS programme, VANL staff also facilitates the following. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CVS engagement in HSCNL. ○ Links between HSC, Community Solutions and Community Planning. ○ NL CVS Befriending Network ○ NLC CVS Mental Health and Wellbeing Network, which it convenes, co-ordinates and supports. During spring-summer 2021, VANL will map CVS contribution to mental health and wellbeing and will support improvements. • VANL's CEO represents the NL CVS on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the HSCNL's Integrated Joint Board ○ Lanarkshire Mental Health Strategy Board the Good Mental Health for All sub-group • CS's Senior Manager represents the NL CVS on HSCNL's Strategic Leadership Team and other sub-groups as appropriate.

Plan for NL Ambitions	NL Community and Voluntary Sector Contribution	VANL Contribution (see other sections)
<p>3.5 Encourage the health and wellbeing of people through a range of social, cultural, and leisure activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community arts activities • Community gala days and festivals • Community sports • Community support groups (see above) • Green health initiatives • Heritage projects • Volunteering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VANL supports the NL CVS and associated volunteering through which a range of social, cultural, leisure activities are provided to local people. • VANL is supporting Reeltime Music deliver a new community arts initiative in NL with funding they have received from Creative Scotland. • VANL plans to establish a NL VS Arts, Culture and Heritage Network during 2021 to support the sector to develop improved services in this area and secure more funding. Some national funders, (e.g. Heritage Lottery Fund) have indicated possible support for such capacity building work.
<p>4. Improve the ability, participation, and empowerment of our communities.</p> <p>4.1 Transform our natural environment to support wellbeing and inward investment and enhance it for current and future generation.</p> <p>4.2 Ensure we keep our environment clean, safe, and attractive.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allotments and community growing • Community clean-ups • Green health initiatives • Nature conservation, including promotion and protection of green space • Volunteering 	<p>Also see sections 1.2 and 1.5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VANL has been appointed by the NLP Strategic Leadership Board to take the lead role in developing and delivering a community-based and cross-sector approach to tackling the climate emergency through a green and inclusive recovery – through the Action Together on Climate initiative. The ACT Now Action Plan will be agreed in April 2021 and VANL will then support delivery, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ convening the ACT Now cross-sector Co-ordination Group ○ working with NLC, NHS and CVS colleagues to support inclusive and green recovery through LOIPs and Community Boards ○ supporting CVS engagement and contribution including supporting organisational “carbon reduction plans” and hosting, convening and co-ordinating the NL CVS Climate Emergency Network.

Plan for NL Ambitions	NL Community and Voluntary Sector Contribution	VANL Contribution
<p>4.3 Ensure our digital transformation is responsive to all people's needs and enables access to the services they need.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy and support for digital inclusion including training. 	<p>Support for and participation in the Digital NL Partnership, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • membership of the Steering Group through VANL's CEO • advocacy for digital inclusion • provision of ICT support and training for NL CVS organisations • development, hosting and management of two digital inclusion projects (supported by dedicated project funding): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NL "TechShare" device gifting project (to be fully launched in spring 2021 when COVID-19 restriction ease) ○ Digital Friends initiative to support people requiring support to improve digital skills to receive this remotely supported by volunteers and linked to remote befriending.
<p>4.4 Improve engagement with communities and develop their capacity to help themselves</p> <p>4.5 .Improve the involvement of communities in the decisions, and development of services and supports, that affect them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active engagement with service users and local residents through service delivery, consultation and community fora. • Support for active citizenship and community engagement through community fora including Community Boards. • Supporting self-care, self-management and recovery for people with physical and mental health problems. 	<p>VANL staff support community engagement and capacity building as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convening the Community and Voluntary Sector Partnership Group which brings key representatives from NL-wide CVS thematic networks and anchor organisations and locality anchor organisations and community networks to support strategic engagement with community planning and the Plan for NL. • Convening and/or supporting a number of NL-wide CVS Thematic Networks to support the NL CVS to share information and learning; strengthen collaborative working; and influence statutory policies and services informed by experience and service users' views, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Befriending ○ Children, Young People and Families ○ Climate Emergency ○ Employability ○ Mental Health and Wellbeing • Providing support to NL CVS to assist them with their community engagement activities, including guidance and training

Plan for NL Ambitions	NL Community and Voluntary Sector Contribution	VANL Contribution
4.4. and 4.5 cont.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting CVS participation in Community Boards and LOIPs (see section 1.2) • Managing the Community Solutions programme which funds CS to help vulnerable groups with self-care, self-management and recovery (see sections 3.2; 3.3 and 3.4). • Working with colleagues in NLP and NHS to develop a “community concordat” in consultation with local communities.
<p>5.Improve North Lanarkshire’s resource base.</p> <p>5.1 Continue to identify and access opportunities to leverage additional resources to support our ambitions.</p> <p>5.2 Facilitate a North Lanarkshire wide approach to asset rationalisation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many NL CVS organisations secure income from multiple sources, including funding through public donation; grants; trading. • NL CVS bring in significant additional funding linked or matched to funding secured from NLC, NHS Lanarkshire and HSCNL. • NLC CVS can apply for transfer of assets from NLC, although only a few transfers have been completed as of Nov. 2020. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VANL provides NL CVS with funding advice and support. • VANL’s CEO and Senior Manager for Community and Voluntary Sector Development are working with senior NLC Communities Team and NHS Lanarkshire Health Improvement staff to develop a C19 Recovery, Renewal and Strategic Investment plan with the NL CVS to strengthen their capacity to support delivery of the P4NL, C19 Recovery and ACT Now plan. Once the above new approach to investing in NL CVS is agreed by NLC and partners, VANL will support delivery. • VANL staff will assist the NL CVS on asset transfer. • VANL will develop links with NL private sector to facilitate an increase in the support (cash and in-kind) they provide to NL CVS.

Plan for NL Ambitions	NL Community and Voluntary Sector Contribution	VANL Contribution
<p>5.3 Build a workforce for the future capable of delivering on our priorities and shared ambition including with communities and partners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NL CVS have an extensive paid and voluntary workforce that enables delivery of wide- ranging support and services to NL citizens and communities. • Unpaid carers in NL are the largest part of the care “workforce” and need support to deliver their contribution as “equal partners”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VANL plays the lead role in NL for supporting development of the volunteer workforce by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ promoting volunteering to the public and employers to increase the number of volunteers ○ encouraging CVS and statutory organisations to increase their volunteering roles ○ helping with recruitment and matching of volunteers ○ helping with PVG checks ○ administration of the Saltire Awards for young people and managing a new Youth Volunteering Project during 2021-22 as part of NLC’s Youth Guarantee offer ○ supporting growth of green health volunteering opportunities ○ support and training and accreditation of volunteer-involving organisations, through Volunteer Friendly Awards ○ leading, convening and supporting the NL Volunteering Partnership to support improved cross-sector volunteering development including a first NL Volunteering Strategy • VANL also supports learning for the NL CVS paid and voluntary workforce. During autumn 2020 VANL reviewed its approach to training support to the NL CVS, with its new approach including joint working with partners to plan and deliver training; increasing online learning opportunities; and supporting peer learning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ VANL developed a NL CVS learning programme with New College Lanarkshire, which is using the college’s flexible workforce funding from the Scottish Govt. to offer up to £150,000 worth of free training to NL CVS organisations. This programme - “Skilling Up”- will go live from April 2021, with learning supported remotely and then in person when safe. • From autumn 2021 VANL will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ provide more online training support, including referral to curated training resources from third party sources and access to specialist training for the CVS developed with other Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs) using a special digital training platform for all TSIs and the Scottish CVS ○ peer supported training including action learning sets.

Appendix Five: VANL Resources (in addition to NLC core grant)

1. Scottish Government Core Grant Funding for VANL

1.1 The SG Third Sector Unit (TSU) provides VANL and the Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs) in the other 31 local authority areas with core annual funding as part of its commitment to support implementation of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015; Social Enterprise Action Plan; and volunteering framework.

VANL's current annual core funding from the SG TSU is £253,600, which also supports delivery of VANL's strategic objectives and outcomes set out above in Appendix One and VANL's contribution to the delivery of the Plan for North Lanarkshire set out in Appendix Four.

1.2 VANL's annual funding from the SG has remained the same since 2010 when VANL was established following the merger of its two predecessor organisations (NL Volunteer Centre and NL Council for Voluntary Sector). Given inflation over this time, this is an effective cut in VANL funding in the region of 25%. In addition, the Scottish Government's funding formula for TSIs is based on historic funding allocations to TSI predecessor organisations in each local authority with no account of population or deprivation factors. On a per capita basis, VANL receives one of the lowest funding awards of all TSIs at £0.75 per person whilst Dumfries and Galloway for example receives £2.53 per person. In 2019 the TSI funding formula was reviewed by the SG TSU, however, the Communities Minister decided to retain the current allocation, despite this being structurally unequal.

2. Programme and Project Grant Funding for VANL and for wider CVS through VANL

2.1 Community Solutions Programme Funding

2.1.1 VANL also hosts and manages the Health and Social Care NL (HSCNL) Community Solutions Programme, which includes distribution of nearly £1 million of grants to the NL CVS, which is managed by VANL. VANL receives funding from HSCNL to cover its programme management costs and also receives funding to deliver some project work directly.

2.1.2 The Community Solutions Programme has its own Strategy and objectives which are separate - albeit complementary - to VANL's Strategic Plan. VANL delivers its Strategic Plan and Community Solutions Strategy in a way which maximises synergy and impact of both and delivers value for money.

2.2 NLC Project Funding through VANL (through separate agreements)

2.2.1 ACT Now Project Assistant – hosted by VANL on behalf of the NLP Strategic Leadership Board

Funding for VANL to employ a part-time graduate intern for 6-12 months.

2.2.2 Children, Young People’s Community Mental Health Support – grant funding for distribution via VANL to the NL CVS

Funding likely from April 2021 for 12 months to support continuation of this work with school clusters and CVS.

2.2.3 Financial Insecurity Payments to Vulnerable People through NL CVS – managed by VANL

VANL is facilitating transfer of funds to selected CVS organisations who are making payments to eligible vulnerable people. Some of this funding will be issued during April 2021.

2.2.4 Syrian Refugee Resettlement Worker – post hosted by VANL

VANL receives funding to cover the pay costs of a Support Worker for the Syrian Refugee Resettlement initiative in NL. Funding is from the UK Home Office through North Lanarkshire Council.

2.2.5 Youth Volunteering Project – part of NLC’s Youth Guarantee offer

12 months funding for April 2021 to March 2022 for VANL to employ a part-time post and fund associated support for young people.

3. Trading Income

VANL currently earns very modest gross income each year from providing Independent Examinations of Accounts to smaller charities in NL (under £3K), however, this income is currently insufficient to cover the costs of providing this service.

From autumn 2021, VANL plans to pilot low-cost finance, HR and ICT support services to the NL CVS with the aim of improving our service offer as well as generating sufficient trading to at least cover direct costs and, if possible, generate a modest annual net surplus within a few years to cover VANL’s staff training expenditure and cost-of-living awards, which are not currently covered through our grant funding.

4. VANL Workforce

Most of VANL's core income from NLC and Scottish Govt is used to employ staff to deliver the work set out in its Strategic Plan and associated Community Solutions Strategy. Other costs include premises, office costs and travel. As of as of March 2021, VANL's core staff comprises:

- a CEO
- a senior manager for CVS and Volunteering Development (funded through core funding from Scottish Govt. and NLC)
- a senior manager for the Community Solutions Programme (funded through HSCNL)
- one Children, Young People and Families Development Officer (funded through HSCNL)
- seven Development Officers (funded through NLC and Scottish Govt core and HSCNL Community Solutions funding)
- three Business Support and two Finance staff (funded through Scottish Govt core and HSCNL Community Solutions funding)

VANL also employs temporary staff from time to time either through supported employment schemes such as Kickstart or with short term project funding.

5. VANL Financial Information

5.1 VANL publishes audited annual accounts as part of its Trustees' Annual Report which are published on its website and submitted to Office for the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). Our most recent report is for 2020-21.

5.2 More information regarding VANL's funding is available on request.

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