

NORTH LANARKSHIRE PARTNERSHIP
VOLUNTARY SECTOR STRATEGY
2013 – 2018

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SECTION ONE – INTRODUCTION

PREFACE

- 1.1 The Voluntary Sector Partnership Strategy covers the period 2013 to 2018, and seeks to build on the significant progress that has been made by the Voluntary Sector in North Lanarkshire in playing a key role in the Community Planning Process and delivering services for local people and communities.
- 1.2 The Voluntary Sector Strategy has been prepared through a highly participative process that has involved a detailed programme of consultation. As part of the development planning process, consideration has also been given to the significant changes that have taken place in the operating environment over the last few years and the impact that this has had on the work of the Voluntary Sector and Partner agencies. This has included:
 - The progress that has been made to establish an effective infrastructure for the engagement of the community and voluntary sectors within North Lanarkshire and how this can be strengthened further over the next five years.
 - Reflects the key policy priorities that have been identified at a national and local level and the opportunities to maximise the ongoing contribution of the community and voluntary sector.
 - Aligns the Strategy to the key priorities and actions outlined in the revised North Lanarkshire Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement.
 - Consideration of the impact of the economic recession on local people and how the community and voluntary sector can contribute to actions to mitigate the effects on local communities.
 - Consideration of the impact of the reduction in public sector finance and the work being progressed towards the reshaping of public sector services and the increasing role of the community and voluntary sector.
 - Integration of the Strategy with the North Lanarkshire Social Enterprise Framework and supporting the development of an “Enterprising Third Sector” that has the capacity to develop and deliver sustainable services.
- 1.3 The Strategy will build on the commitment of ensuring that the voluntary sector is appropriately engaged in the structures and decision-making processes of the North Lanarkshire Partnership and is empowered and enabled to play its full part in policy development and service delivery
- 1.4 The Strategy sets out the vision of a vibrant and fully engaged voluntary sector working in partnership to serve the people and communities of North Lanarkshire.

It envisages the ongoing role of the voluntary sector as an equal partner in the Community Planning processes, continuing to play an active part in making a difference to the quality of life of the people of North Lanarkshire through effective engagement, capacity building, community development and social enterprise activity.

- 1.5 The Strategy acknowledges the rich diversity of groups and organisations that make up the voluntary sector across North Lanarkshire and the high quality services delivered by many in an increasingly difficult funding climate. It also highlights the challenges facing the sector and the ongoing support required to build and strengthen the voluntary sector.
- 1.6 The Strategy sets out the aims and objectives of the voluntary sector as a key Community Planning partner, along with key actions to strengthen and develop the work and contribution of the voluntary sector in cooperation with its statutory partners. The Strategy sets out an ongoing process for reviewing progress against agreed priorities and areas of action.
- 1.7 The implementation of the Strategy will be supported by Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire (VANL) as the main “Voluntary Sector Interface Body” who will have responsibility for championing the sector and providing infrastructural support for sector development. Finally, partner agencies are invited to incorporate key actions that will deliver progress in respect of the strategic outcomes within their own organisational work plans.
- 1.8 The Strategy is structured as follows:
 - *Section 1 – Preface* – Sets out the background to the Strategy and the key considerations and approach that has been taken to develop the document.
 - *Section 2 – Development Context* – Sets out the background and progress that has been achieved in North Lanarkshire in relation to the engagement and development of the Voluntary Sector as key partner in the Community Planning Process and, sets out the strategic context and key priorities within North Lanarkshire.
 - *Section 3 – Strategic Framework* – This section of the strategy sets out the Vision; Aim and Objectives; and Key Actions of the Voluntary Sector Strategy.
 - *Section 4 – Implementation* – The final section sets out the arrangements for taking forward the key priorities and areas of action identified in the strategy. This includes arrangements for monitoring progress and reporting.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- 1.9 The Voluntary Sector Partnership Group would like to thank all the people who took the time to participate in the consultation process and provided comment and feedback on the draft Voluntary Sector Strategy

SECTION TWO – DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The introduction of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 provided a statutory requirement for community planning in Scotland. The Act provides a framework to enable the delivery of better, more responsive public services. Local Authorities are charged with initiating, facilitating, and maintaining the community planning process.
- 2.2 The two main aims of community planning are to:
- make sure people and communities are genuinely engaged in the decisions made on public services which affect them; and
 - a commitment from organisations to work together, not apart, in providing better public services.
- 2.3 It was envisaged that the process of community planning would also provide an over-arching framework to help co-ordinate other initiatives and partnerships, including simplifying the operating landscape. In turn, this was expected to lead to an improved connection between national priorities and those at a regional, local, and neighbourhood level.
- 2.4 North Lanarkshire Partnership brings together the major public and voluntary sector agencies in the area and has responsibility for taking forward the development and implementation of the Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement. The purpose of the Community Plan is to identify the key issues which partners aim to address over the period. It sets out how the partners will work together to achieve positive outcomes for local communities and how to achieve the vision for North Lanarkshire that builds on the previous Community Plan covering the period 2008-2011.
- 2.5 The Single Outcome Agreement sets out the indicators that will be measured to track progress in achieving the vision, together with targets and actions that have been set out for the period.

Role of the Voluntary Sector

- 2.6 A key feature of the Community Plan in North Lanarkshire is the strong commitment to engage the voluntary sector as a key strategic partner. This includes the commitment to involve the voluntary sector in the planning process and supporting the sector as a key provider of local services.

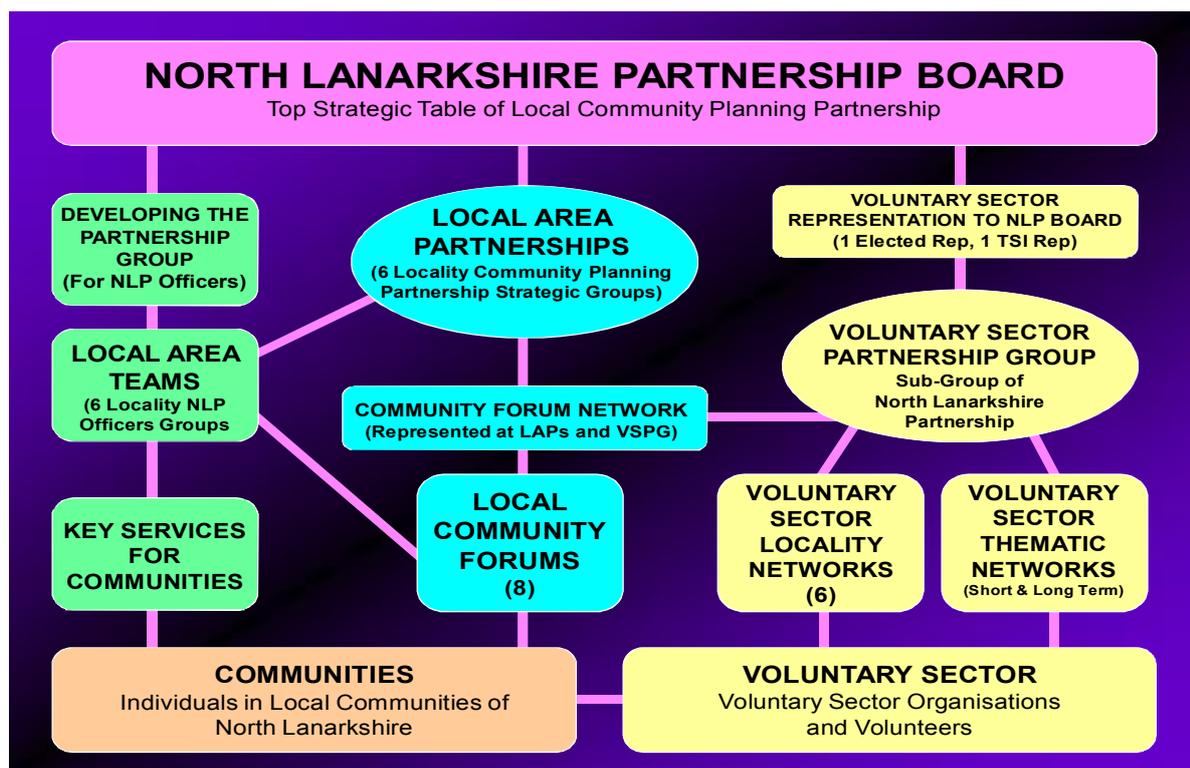
- 2.7 The voluntary sector includes a wide range of independent organisations who play a distinctive role in addressing the needs and concerns of the people and communities of North Lanarkshire. The sector comprises a complex range of large and small organisations, including those which have a very specific local focus and those which are local expressions of national organisations. Although some are structured as trusts and non profit distributing companies limited by guarantee, the majority are formed as unincorporated associations. Many are registered charities. It is estimated that there are currently 1780 community and voluntary organisations operating in North Lanarkshire.
- 2.8 The terms “voluntary sector” and “the sector” have been used inclusively throughout the Strategy to mean both the community and voluntary sectors, irrespective of size and function.

Review of Progress

- 2.9 Over the last five years, significant progress has been made in developing the infrastructure of voluntary sector involvement in community planning and building the capacity of the sector in delivering local services. A strategic approach has been taken with this work, with structure support provided by VANL. A summary of the main elements of this work is as follows:

Voluntary Sector Engagement

- 2.10 Work has been undertaken to maintain and develop a strategic framework for the engagement and involvement of the community and voluntary sector in North Lanarkshire. An outline of the structure is as follows:



2.11 Key features of the approach included:

- *Voluntary Sector representation on NLP Board* – effective structures have been established to support voluntary sector representation on the NLP Board. This has included the development of effective reporting arrangements and linkages back into the Voluntary Sector structures that are used for consultation and for cascading information across the sector.
- *Voluntary Sector Partnership Group* – maintained and developed as the key strategic body for the involvement of the voluntary sector in community planning. Operates as a Sub-Group of NLP with representation from the voluntary sector and public sector partners.
- *Thematic and Locality Networks* – infrastructure of Locality Networks that involves community and voluntary sector organisations within localities to focus on local issues and link to community planning. A range of Thematic Networks have also been established and maintained that focuses on drawing together representation around key strategic priorities.
- *Local Area Partnership and Local Community Forums* – supports the engagement at a local area level and links to the work of the Local Area Teams. A mechanism (Community Forum Network) has also been established to link the work of Community Forums with the VSPG.

2.12 The engagement infrastructure is supported and serviced by VANL as a key aspect of their work as the main interface body for the community and voluntary sector in North Lanarkshire. Good progress has been made to develop and maintain the strategic framework for the engagement of the voluntary sector. However, it is also recognised that further work is required as part of the Strategy to strengthen and develop the voluntary sector engagement framework. Key issues to be progressed include:

- *Communication* – Further work required to strengthen and develop the communication arrangements, building on the progress to date but developing further the processes for cascading information throughout the sector.
- *Structures* - Need to review the existing structures and refresh, as appropriate. This includes the work to review and develop the role and remit of the various structures including the arrangements for representation. This will also include reviewing the Thematic Priorities and ensuring that these reflect the key strategic priorities for the area.
- *Representation* – Further work required to build the capacity of voluntary sector representation – building awareness and understanding of policy changes; development priorities; and strategic initiatives.
- *Capacity Building* – Detailed programme of work required to build the capacity of the voluntary sector in order to cope with the changes facing the sector and be able to build sustainable community services.

This includes action and support to address the ongoing financial pressure facing the voluntary sector; supporting the move from grant funding to contracting, building the capacity of the sector around procurement and contract compliance and, ongoing development of effective governance arrangements.

POLICY AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

- 2.13 This section of the Strategy sets out the overarching context and the contribution that the voluntary sector can make towards local and national strategic objectives. In particular, this includes the contribution the voluntary sector can make to Community Planning, the National Performance Framework and the focus on achieving local outcomes through the Single Outcome Agreement.
- 2.14 It is recognised that there have been significant changes in the economic and policy environment in recent years and that the future development of the voluntary sector has to link strategically with objectives, both at local and national level. It is also recognised that the sector has to be responsive to new and emerging policy initiatives and be able to play a key role in the process of change.
- 2.15 The following section of the Strategy provides an overview of key policy drivers and how the voluntary sector will contribute to a range of policy priorities.

Programme for Scotland

- 2.16 The *Programme for Scotland* focuses resources and priorities on the 5 key strategic objectives for a 'Wealthier & Fairer Scotland', a 'Smarter Scotland', a 'Healthier Scotland', a 'Safer & Stronger Scotland', and a 'Greener Scotland'. The Programme sets out the Scottish Government's legislative and non legislative agenda in an effort to achieve its overarching purpose '*to focus Government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable growth*'. The Programme for Scotland is underpinned by the National Performance Framework [Strategic Objectives, National Outcomes, and National Indicators] in the delivery of public services and resources.
- 2.17 The Programme for Scotland recognises the important role that the voluntary sector has to play in both the planning and delivery of local services. The approach is also set out in the Scottish Government's Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill which will be consulted on in draft in the summer of 2013. The approach sets out the requirement to ensure that the voluntary sector is effectively engaged with Community Planning Partnerships and the Scottish Government to represent the best interests of the sector and the communities they serve.
- 2.18 A key part of the work over the period of the strategy will be to support the voluntary sector within North Lanarkshire to contribute to the Programme for Government and drive forward real change within the local area.

North Lanarkshire Community Plan

- 2.19 In 2012, the Scottish Government and COSLA carried out a Review of Community Planning and Single Outcome Agreements which resulted in a “Statement of Ambition”. This set a new direction for outcome based partnership working and how local community planning partnerships will deliver against national priorities at a local level. The review builds on the recommendations from the Christie Commission findings and states *“that action is needed to build on this success by removing barriers to effective partnership working and to ensure that leadership and cultures, systems and structures and accountability arrangements across public services fully enable the delivery of better outcomes for communities. The Scottish Government has agreed with these conclusions and has established a broad programme of public sector reform”*.
- 2.20 Against this backdrop, North Lanarkshire Partnership (NLP) is tasked with taking forward all Community Planning activity across the area and recently reviewed and updated the Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement (SOA). The revised plan sets out the new structures, priorities and areas of action to be progressed in North Lanarkshire during the period 2013 to 2018. The new Community Plan/SOA is based around a number of key themes that have been revised and developed through the planning process. The themes cover:

- **Lifelong Learning** – this will continue to focus on the development of learning opportunities for local people but will have an additional focus on volunteering and capacity building. Proposed priorities will include Better Aspirations; Better Communities; Better Prospects; and Better Opportunities.
- **Health and Wellbeing** – continued focus on the development of health and wellbeing with proposed priorities around Better Housing; Improved Health Improvement; and Better Community Care.
- **Regeneration** – combining the existing regeneration and environment strands with a new focus on social, economic, physical and environmental regeneration. Proposed priorities will include improved Regeneration; improved Environment; and improved Local Economy.
- **Community Safety** – continued focus on community safety. Proposed priorities include reduced crime; improved fire safety; better neighbourhood management and, improved road safety.
- **Developing the Partnership** – new theme that will focus on the systems and processes which support the North Lanarkshire Partnership. Proposed priorities include effective partnership structures; effective Thematic Groups; clearer Outcome focus; robust evidence base; effective performance management.

- 2.21 Building on the work to be carried out under the key themes, a number of cross cutting themes have been identified that need to be addressed in order to achieve positive outcomes for local communities. These include:
- *The Voluntary Sector* – focused on improving the quality of voluntary sector services and making them more responsive to the needs and aspirations of local communities. This will include action to develop the capacity of the voluntary sector to engage in Community Planning.

- *Community Engagement* – focused on involving residents in decision-making linked to community planning, improved involvement of residents in community life and, building stronger more resilient organisations.
- *Children and Young People* – focused on ensuring that children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed; supporting young people to be successful learners who are confident and effective contributors and are responsible citizens; and that there are improved life chances for children, young people and families at risk.
- *Sustainable Transport* – focused on improving the safety, effectiveness, sustainability and accessibility of the transport system across North Lanarkshire.

2.22 It is clear that the voluntary sector has an important role to play in terms of contributing and influencing the themes and priorities set out in the Community Plan and support the partnership work in North Lanarkshire.

Employability, Skills & Learning

- 2.23 A key issue within North Lanarkshire is the ongoing need to address unemployment and worklessness by focusing activity on the barriers that prevent individuals moving towards sustainable employment. The '*Employability Framework*' and '*More Choices, More Chances*' are some of the recent policies that have sought to address the barriers that many experience in moving into the labour market. An increasing emphasis has been placed on engaging hard to reach groups and those that are furthest removed from the labour market i.e. individuals with mental health issues, drug / alcohol addiction etc. As a result of the changes to the Welfare System [including reforms to ESA & Disability Allowance] there is the possibility of greater financial impact on a number of households, particularly those in areas of high deprivation where a significant number of households receive health related benefits.
- 2.24 It is also recognised that the lack of experience or recognised qualifications is one of the major barriers experienced by individuals in their efforts to move back into the labour market. The Scottish Government's '*Skills for Scotland – A Lifelong Skills Strategy*' sets out the Government's ambitions for '*skills in a lifelong context, from cradle to grave*' by recognising individuals' different needs, situations and goals and to remove the barriers that limit what people can do and can be.
- 2.25 It is recognised that North Lanarkshire has been one of the areas most affected by the economic recession. The decline in the economic position has continued through 2012 with the number of people claiming JSA continuing to increase.
- 2.26 Against this backdrop, the Community Plan for North Lanarkshire has identified the issue of worklessness as one of its key priorities, and has taken a strategic approach to the delivery of Employability Services through "North Lanarkshire's Working" that seeks to provide a seamless employability service to prepare unemployed residents to compete in the labour market of that time.

The approach is also set out in the North Lanarkshire Local Economic and Regeneration Strategy that sets out the key priorities for the area and how the Council and Partners will work together to achieve the regeneration outcomes including actions to address the issue of worklessness.

2.27 It is evident that supporting activity to address unemployment and worklessness within North Lanarkshire will be one of the key priorities for the voluntary sector over the next few years. This will include a range of activity including:

- Supporting voluntary sector organisations to take a coordinated approach to the delivery of activity to address unemployment and worklessness. This will be supported through the Employability Thematic Group.
- Supporting the coordination of employment training initiatives involving voluntary sector organisations to maximise the impact within North Lanarkshire.
- Supporting voluntary sector organisations to become sustainable, local bodies that provide local services and create employment opportunities for local people.
- Supporting actions through the voluntary sector to mitigate the impact of welfare reform on local people in North Lanarkshire.

Re-Shaping Care for Older People

2.28 As part of the Scottish Government Programme for the Reshaping Care for Older People, work is being progressed in North Lanarkshire through a partnership involving NHS Lanarkshire, North Lanarkshire Council, Voluntary Sector and, the independent sector.

2.29 Reshaping Care for Older People is a national initiative led by a joint ministerial steering group, which has been running since May 2009. Its aim is to consider ways of developing sustainable methods of providing care for older people in the light of the considerable increase in the number of older people across Scotland, set alongside the existing pressures on services in both the Health and Social Care arena. The principal goal of the programme in this context is to optimise independence and well-being for older people at home or in a home like setting.

2.30 As part of this process, a Change Fund has been established that will be used to support the implementation of Local Transformation Plans (LTP). These will indicate in some detail how partnerships and their constituent elements will use the Change Fund to lever the shifts in the balance of care which are needed to improve and sustain care for older people which is personalised, outcomes focused and enables people to optimise their well-being and independence at home or in a home like setting.

- 2.31 A key feature of the Local Transformation Plan for North Lanarkshire is the focus on building the capacity of the voluntary sector to deliver community based services for older people. The aim of the capacity building work is to promote active citizenship and support older people and carers in maintaining health and wellbeing. The capacity building work aims to ensure that older people and carers are valued, their voices heard and that they are fully supported to enjoy full and positive lives, thereby improving outcomes for older adults and their carers and support older citizens to live well in their own homes by:
- Reducing isolation and loneliness
 - Enabling participation and valuing diversity
 - Enhancing the use of information advice and education
 - Improve independence wellbeing
 - Delaying, as far as possible, the need for complex care and support
- 2.32 A strategic framework has been established in North Lanarkshire to take forward activity as part of the Community Capacity Building and Carers Support Programme in line with the priorities sets out for Reshaping Care for Older People.
- 2.33 This work will continue to be one of the key priorities for the voluntary sector over the next few years and will involve:
- Delivery of a co-ordinated approach to Capacity Building and Carers Support in line with the priorities for Reshaping Care for Older People. This will include the ongoing involvement of the voluntary sector in the planning structures for RCOP.
 - Supporting actions to build the capacity of community and voluntary sector organisations to be able to develop and deliver sustainable community based services that can support older people and carers.

Children and Young People

- 2.34 It is recognised by all of the partners involved in North Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership that the voluntary sector plays a vital role in the delivery of service and support to children, young people and families. Over the last few years, good progress has been made in North Lanarkshire to develop joint working arrangements, increase the focus towards early intervention and prevention; and maximise the opportunities to improve the outcomes for children, young people and families living in the area.
- 2.35 However, it is also recognised by all the partners that further work is required to strengthen the joint working and involvement of third sector organisations in the planning and delivery of services.

This will involve activity to develop structures to engage effectively with third sector organisations working with children, young people and families, and creating mechanisms for representation within existing strategic structures including the Voluntary Sector Partnership Group (which links the voluntary sector with the Community Planning Partnership), Integrated Children Services Locality Planning Groups, and with the recently reconvened GIRFEC (Getting It Right For Every Child) Reference Group. Activity also requires to be focused on developing the capacity of third sector organisations in order that they can deliver activity which contributes to the national outcomes for children, young people and families based on the GIRFEC Principles.

- 2.36 It is estimated that there are circa 159 organisations operating in the area that deliver a variety of activity for children, young people and families. Over the last few years, good progress has been made in North Lanarkshire to develop joint working arrangements, increase the focus towards early intervention and prevention, and maximise the opportunities to improve the outcomes for children, young people and families living in the area.
- 2.37 As part of the Voluntary Sector Strategy, it is also recognised that more work requires to be done to strengthen the joint planning and delivery of services, and to support the voluntary sector deliver more effectively, national outcomes relating to children, young people and families.
- 2.38 The approach over the next few years will involve the development of a programme of work with voluntary sector organisations involved in delivering services and activities for children, young people and families in North Lanarkshire. The aim of the programme is:
- To support the development and implementation of a strategic planning structure in North Lanarkshire that will involve voluntary sector organisations working with children, young people and families to influence policy and practice at a local, regional and national level.
 - To deliver a co-ordinated programme of capacity building for voluntary sector organisations in North Lanarkshire working with children, young people and families that will assist them to deliver more effectively, services for children and young people – resulting in improved outcomes for children and young people in the area.
 - To develop a structure and process for improved monitoring and evaluation that can be used to inform policy and practice and lead to improved outcomes for children and young people.

Social Enterprise Framework 2013-2018

- 2.39 In parallel with the development of the Voluntary Strategy, work has been progressed to develop a new Social Enterprise Framework for North Lanarkshire.

The Framework covers the period 2013 – 2018, and acknowledges the important contribution that social enterprises play in delivering services and creating jobs.

- 2.40 It is recognised that social enterprises currently deliver services in areas such as employment, social and health care, transport and, renewable energy. Social Enterprise organisations are now major players within these fields. It is evident that a key message emerging within the current policy context is the increasing role of the social economy sector in contributing to community regeneration and economic growth throughout Scotland. The *'Better Business – An Action Plan for Social Enterprise in Scotland'* outlines a range of action that requires to be taken in order to create a sustainable and dynamic social enterprise sector in Scotland. This was subsequently supported by the *'Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan 2008 – 2011'*.
- 2.41 The development of social enterprise activity within the area has previously been taken forward on a "pan-Lanarkshire" basis through the Lanarkshire Social Economy Partnership. However, the new Social Enterprise Framework will now be focused on a North Lanarkshire basis with support arrangements in place to take forward the key priorities and areas of action for the area. This will include:
- Exploring opportunities to develop Alternative Finance Models that can be used to support the development of social enterprise organisations.
 - Development of Sustainable Procurement as a key driver for social enterprise development and growth.
 - Improving the evidence base and assessing how social enterprise contributes to regeneration outcomes for the area.
 - Actions to maximise the use of new technology and social media for information sharing and communications across the social enterprise sector.
- 2.42 Action will also be taken to ensure a coordinated approach is taken towards the development of social enterprise in North Lanarkshire. This will include specific programmes of work that will be coordinated through the North Lanarkshire Social Economy Partnership. This will be designed to complement the wider Capacity Building Support to develop an enterprising voluntary sector with support through VANL.

National Volunteering Strategy

- 2.43 The national volunteering strategy has been in force since 2004 and amongst other things, having a focus on increasing volunteers from socially diverse backgrounds, raising awareness of the benefits of volunteering, particularly amongst young people, improving opportunities and standards. Volunteer Development Scotland is Scotland's Centre for Excellence in volunteering and aims to modernise approaches to volunteering policy, enhance practice and improve the quality of the volunteering experience for the people of Scotland.

- 2.44 Supporting volunteering will continue to be one of the key priorities of the Voluntary Sector Strategy to ensure that support is available within the area focused on the recruitment, matching, and supporting local people to become volunteers as part of the commitment to promoting active citizenship and becoming engaged in voluntary activity.

SECTION THREE – STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Vision for the Voluntary Sector in North Lanarkshire

- 3.1 This vision for the voluntary sector in North Lanarkshire is of a vibrant and fully engaged sector working in partnership to serve the people and communities of North Lanarkshire. It states that:

The voluntary sector will continue to be an equal partner at all levels and stages of Community Planning policy development, decision making, and service delivery. Its contribution to improving the quality of life of the people and communities of North Lanarkshire will be characterised by its ability to:

- Continue to play an active part in achieving Community Planning outcomes through effective engagement, capacity building, community development and social enterprise activity.
- Continue to work collaboratively, both within the sector and across the sectors, taking the lead, when appropriate.
- Continue to identify, inform, and represent the interests of the sector in the structures and processes of the NLP and other associated partnerships.

Shared Principles and Values:

- 3.2 The shared principles and values that underpin the strategy are:

- Voluntary action is an essential component of democratic society
- An independent and diverse voluntary and community sector is fundamental to the wellbeing of residents in North Lanarkshire
- The voluntary and statutory sectors have distinct but complementary roles in the development and delivery of public services
- Both sectors acknowledge the added value working in partnership brings to residents and organisations involved
- Meaningful consultation builds relationships, improves policy development and enhances the design and delivery of services and programmes
- Voluntary and community organisations are entitled to campaign within the law in order to advance their aims and should not be penalised for doing so
- Both the voluntary and statutory sectors acknowledge the importance of promoting equal opportunities regardless of race, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation or religion and that this is reflected in their strategies, policies and procedures which are accessible to all

- Volunteering should be open to all, and must be a choice freely made by each individual
- Volunteering should be viewed as an expression of active citizenship
- As far as possible, a consensus approach to conflict resolution should be adopted between the voluntary and statutory sectors

3.3 It is understood that the voluntary and statutory sectors have different forms of accountability and are answerable to a range of different stakeholders. However, both sectors should ensure there is integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, trust and honesty in all that they do.

Aim and Objectives:

3.4 The voluntary sector strategy is based on the following aim and objectives:

3.5 The aim of the Strategy is:

“To continue to build the capacity of the community and voluntary sector to contribute to the shaping and delivery of better services and an improved quality of life for the people and communities of North Lanarkshire.”

3.6 The key Objectives of the Voluntary Sector Strategy include:

- *Effective Representation* - Ensure that the community and voluntary sector and its representatives are enabled to access all levels of the Community Plan and participate fully in its processes and structures
- *Communication and Engagement* - Ensure that the community and voluntary sector are informed and consulted about community planning initiatives and priorities
- *Capacity Building and Collaborative Working* - Build the capacity of the community and voluntary sector to develop and deliver services through collaborative working, service level agreements and contractual arrangements across the range of Community Planning Thematic Priorities.
- *Making an Impact* - Ensure that the voluntary and community sector has in place effective monitoring and evaluation arrangements that can be used to gather information and demonstrate the contribution and impact of the sector to the work of the Community Planning Partnership.

Key Actions

3.7 An outline of the key actions that have been identified are as follows:

Objective 1: Effective Representation - Ensure that the community and voluntary sector and its representatives are enabled to access all levels of the Community Plan and participate fully in its processes and structures;

Key Actions

Support the effective representation of the voluntary sector at the North Lanarkshire Partnership Board

Support the effective representation of the voluntary sector within the six Local Area Partnership's and Communication Networks.

Support the effective representation of the voluntary sector at the six Integrated Children's Service Locality Planning Groups

Support the effective representation of the voluntary sector on the Reshaping Care for Older People Strategic Planning Group and other associated sub-groups.

Support the effective representation of the voluntary sector on the North Lanarkshire Social Enterprise Partnership and Strategic Operations Group

Objective 2: Communication and Engagement - Ensure that the community and voluntary sector are informed, and consulted about community planning initiatives and priorities:

Key Actions

Undertake a review of existing voluntary sector engagement structures to ensure that these are operating effectively and are aligned with the key strategic priorities within the revised voluntary sector strategy.

Develop a new communication strategy focussed on key strategic priorities and policy developments that will be used for the distribution of information across the sector and establishing a mechanism for obtaining ongoing feedback. This will include the use of new technology and social media as appropriate.

Develop a programme of capacity building training for representatives involved in the implementation of the engagement structures covering roles; responsibilities; accountability and reporting; etc.

Develop a programme of support to address barriers to involvement in line with the National Standards for Community Engagement.

Objective 3: Capacity Building and Collaborative Working - Build the capacity of the community and voluntary sector to develop and deliver services through collaborative working, service level agreements, contractual arrangements across the range of Community Planning Thematic Priorities.

Key Actions

Co-ordinate the delivery of an ongoing programme of capacity building for the voluntary sector focussed on building sustainable services and activity. This will include work around the development of funding strategies and income generation; development of collaborative working arrangements; procurement and contract compliance; service development; and governance.

Develop a programme of structured support for the delivery of services that are focussed on key strategic priorities including employability; reshaping care for older people; work with children and young people; welfare reform; and community transport development.

Objective 4: Making an Impact – Ensure that the voluntary and community sector has in place effective monitoring and evaluation arrangements that can be used to gather information and demonstrate the contribution and impact of the sector to the work of the Community Planning Partnership.

Key Actions

Undertake a baseline review and impact analysis of the current service activity and contribution of the community and voluntary sector to the strategic priorities of the Community Planning Partnership.

Develop a new monitoring and evaluation framework that is aligned to the revised strategic priorities of the Community Planning Partnership that can be used to gather information and report on the contribution and impact being achieved through the work of the sector.

SECTION 4 – IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation

- 4.1 The VSPG has responsibility for driving the strategy forward, developing associated action plans, and for measuring performance and reporting progress towards the achievement of the desired outcomes. A detailed operational plan will be prepared that will be kept under review and will be updated on an annual basis. The operational plan will be aligned to the work plan of VANL as the main infrastructural support body for the community and voluntary sector. Partner agencies are also invited to incorporate key actions that will deliver progress in respect of the strategic outcomes within their own organisational work plans.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- 4.2 Following the review of the North Lanarkshire Community Plan and SOA, arrangements will be progressed to develop effective monitoring and evaluation arrangements that can be used to gather information and report on the contribution of the community and voluntary sector. This will involve undertaking a baseline review and impact analysis over the next year and the development of a new monitoring and evaluation framework that can be used to demonstrate the contribution of the sector to the key strategic priorities of North Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership.

Infrastructure Support

- 4.3 VANL has responsibility for providing infrastructural support for sector development. The role of VANL will include local infrastructure functions, support to voluntary organisations operating in the area, both local and those national organisations that deliver services at the local level, support to and promotion of volunteering, support and development of social enterprise, the connection between the Community Planning Partnership and the third sector. The work plan for VANL will be fully aligned to the key priorities of the Voluntary Sector Strategy.