

VOLUNTARY

ACTION

North

Lanarkshire

Community and Voluntary Sector Strategy for North Lanarkshire

2022-2025



The drafting of this strategy was informed by consultation with CVS:

- on their needs and priorities in March-April 2019 through an online survey and discussion at six Community and Voluntary Sector locality events.
- further surveys in summer 2020 and spring 2021 with focus on CVS response and recovery for C19.

The initial draft was discussed at:

- CVS Partnership Group (CVSPG) Nov 2019
- six CVS locality meetings Nov-Dec 2019

An initial draft was shared with North Lanarkshire Council in February 2020 through the Community Empowerment Committee.

Publication was delayed due to C19 with the updated draft approved by the CVSPG in August 2021 for publication and implementation.

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1. Section One: Introduction

1.1. Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to provide shared vision, mission and objectives to guide and support the strategic development of the North Lanarkshire Community and Voluntary Sector (NL CVS) in for 2021-2024. The strategy will be reviewed and updated at least every three years.

(The community and voluntary sector is also known as the “third sector”. The term community and voluntary sector is used here as the term is clearer and does not imply a hierarchy between the public, private and voluntary sectors.)

1.2. Development

[Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire](#) (VANL), the umbrella body for NL CVS supported preparation of this strategy on behalf of the CVS Partnership Group (CVSPG):

- in consultation with CVS organisations to identify their needs and priorities, including online surveys and discussion groups
- the local and national policy, practice and funding context.

1.3. Links to other Strategies

This strategy supports delivery of the [Plan for North Lanarkshire](#) – our “community plan” – and the nine, linked Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIPs).

This strategy is complemented by the forthcoming CVS Children, Young People and Families Strategy and cross-sector North Lanarkshire Volunteering Strategy, which will be published in winter 2021.

1.4. Implementation

VANL will work with members of the CVSPG, the wider CVS and colleagues in North Lanarkshire Council and NHS Lanarkshire to support implementation of this strategy.

VANL also has a complementary organisational Strategic Plan for 2022-25 which aligns with this CVS Strategy, with sections two and three and values largely the same.



2. Section Two: The Community and Voluntary Sector in North Lanarkshire

2.1 Scale and Diversity

The NL CVS is large, with an estimated 1,600 diverse groups and organisations including:

- 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 often assisted by volunteers; and relying on regular and adequate funding, some of which may come from trading
- social enterprises – that is not-for-profit businesses providing socially useful products and/or services, which includes housing associations and co-operatives.

VANL captures information on the NL CVS and shares this through the “Working Together for a Better North Lanarkshire” and the online “Locator” map.

2.2 Strengths and Assets

The NL CVS (as more widely) has many recognised strengths and assets.

- It is value-led with a focus
 - on being person and community centred
 - promoting wellbeing, inclusion, equality, human rights
- The majority of CVS organisations focus on helping people, but some focus on environmental issues.
- The sector is non-profit and asset locked, with any surplus re-invested to assist beneficiaries
- It is responsive to beneficiary needs and has strong community connections and reach.
- The sector provides a wide range of support for all ages and on diverse issues and needs - including prevention and early intervention and longer-term and crisis response.
- The sector supports community and user empowerment and engagement.
- The sector’s trustees paid and voluntary workforce demonstrate passion and commitment to achieving their purpose and goals.
- The sector is committed to being effective and achieving positive outcomes for service users and wider communities. For example, many community and voluntary organisations:
 - use evidence and learning to support good practice and improvements, whilst also supporting innovation
 - work collaboratively with other organisations within their sector and the public sector – for example through the [Community Solutions Programme](#)



- evaluate and report on the reach and benefits of their activities, including outcomes
- are independently assessed by social care and social housing regulators, with many receiving high scores on quality measures
- achieve or are committed to achieving accreditation through the [Volunteer Friendly scheme](#)

Also, all registered charities in Scotland must pursue good governance in line with legal requirements and the [Scottish Code of Good Governance](#) and provide annual reports and financial information to the [Office of the Charity Regulator](#) (OSCR).

2.3 Challenges and Support Needs and Priorities

VANL assesses the NL CVS' priorities and support needs through regular consultation, feedback and evaluation. CVS priorities identified up to 2021 to inform development of this strategy are summarised below.

2.3.1 Improved funding and resources

- Grant and contract funding for the CVS needs to reflect the real costs of delivery and enable CVS organisations to be good and fair employers.
- Funding awards should support sustainability of organisations and their work with three-year funding agreements where possible.
- CVS needs support to diversify their income sources, including income from trading where possible.
- The voluntary workforce needs to be strengthened.
- The CVS needs access to affordable and/or free community venues.

2.3.2 Improved guidance and training

CVS organisations need access to free or affordable guidance and training on key organisational issues including:

- leadership and governance
- strategic planning
- innovation, improvement and evaluation
- funding
- people management



- ICT
- communications and influencing
- workplace wellbeing and health and safety
- equality, human rights and public protection

Some CVS organisations also need access to training and support around key population groups and issues – for example children and young people; older adults; tackling poverty; digital inclusion; climate and environment.

2.3.3 Effective participation, voice and influence

The CVS 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 collaborative and co-production approaches to joint working.

2.3.4 Improved communication

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

2.3.5 Improved recognition and understanding

The overall contribution of the CVS - including volunteering - needs to be celebrated and promoted more effectively across North Lanarkshire to all sectors and to the public.



3. Section Three: Rationale and Context

3.1 Rationale

This strategy has been developed in response to the scale, diversity, support needs and priorities of NL CVS and is also informed by the following rationale, which reflects the spirit and requirements of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 and other legislation and good practice in areas such as human rights, equality, health and social care and sustainable development.

3.1.1 A vibrant, dynamic and effective NL CVS is vital to society as it makes essential and valued contributions to people lives:

- providing support and services to local people that protect and promote quality of life and well-being, including social care, health improvement, learning and employability support, cultural, leisure and sporting activities
- protecting the natural environment and tackling climate change
- providing employment and volunteering opportunities for local people
- contributing to public discussion and decisions about local public strategies, policies, services and infrastructure.
- supports empowerment and participation in communities of place and communities of interest, especially of vulnerable and equality groups such as children and young people; people with long term conditions and/or disabilities; older adults; and people on low income.

3.1.2 The NL CVS achieves more when it works together and in partnership with local statutory and business organisations.

- The NL CVS already works together on key issues and equality groups through various networks and forums, including:
 - advice and information, including money and benefits support
 - befriending
 - biodiversity and climate emergencies
 - carers
 - children, young people and families
 - community justice



- disability
- employability
- mental health and wellbeing
- older adults

These CVS thematic networks and forums also support CVS engagement with relevant partnerships and initiatives such as Children Services Partnership, Community Justice Partnership; Health and Social Care North Lanarkshire; Tackling Poverty initiative.

- The NL CVS is also supported by the CVS Partnership Group which supports strategic discussion and action on common priorities and engagement with the North Lanarkshire Partnership for community planning. NL CVS organisations are also represented on the nine NLP Community Boards

3.1.3 The NL CVS benefits from guidance and support provided by VANL, which helps them to:

- secure funding
- govern and achieve their goals more effectively
- influence improvements to local public strategies, polices and services and infrastructure
- collaborate with each other and with the public and private sectors to achieve more positive outcomes for local people and communities.

2.1 Context

3.2.1 North Lanarkshire

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.

Pressure on public sector budgets since 2008, has led to reductions in overall expenditure on public services and reduced funding for the CVS from the public sector. The COVID 19 pandemic has also placed greater pressure on public sector and CVS budgets in the short term with medium- and longer-term income uncertain. Despite stretched resources, the COVID 19 pandemic and the need to tackle poverty and the climate emergency will continue to place growing pressures on the public sector and CVS.

Despite these major challenges, there is a strong commitment by the NL public sector and CVS 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 affordable land and housing, providing a prime location for local businesses and people and for businesses and people wishing to relocate.
- Excellent employability support to help local people find good work with fair pay.
- Access to valued green and leisure resources, including Strathclyde Country Park, Drumpelier Country Park, Palacerigg Country Par, Kilsyth Hills and the Forth and Clyde Canal.
- Many excellent public services, despite financial pressures.
- Continuing – albeit reduced - funding of the NL CSV through grants and service contracts from North Lanarkshire Council and Health and Social Care North Lanarkshire Partnership with growing commitment to invest in the CVS.
- A large and diverse CVS providing valued support and services to local people
- A positive volunteering culture.

3.2.2 Plan for North Lanarkshire

The “Plan for North Lanarkshire, which was launched to the CVS at its annual conference in June 2019, is a high-level strategic plan for all community planning partners in North Lanarkshire, including:

- North Lanarkshire Council
- NHS Lanarkshire
- Police Scotland
- Fire and Rescue Scotland
- Scottish Enterprise
- and VANL on behalf of the wider community and voluntary sector.

The Plan for North Lanarkshire has five key themes of “Live, Learn, Work, Invest and Visit” linked to 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.

Delivery of these ambitions are supported by a variety of linked North Lanarkshire partnerships and NL-wide strategies including:

- Biodiversity and Green Space plans
- Children's Services Partnership and linked Children's Services Plan
- Climate Action Plans, including the NLP Action on Climate Together Plan and individual partners' plans
- Community Justice Partnership and linked plan
- Economic Regeneration Strategy and Tackling Poverty Strategy
- Health and Social Care Commissioning Strategy
- Housing Strategy
- Lanarkshire Mental Health and Well Being Strategy
- Local Development Plan, which supports physical planning for housing, communities, business and transport

The NL CVS already contribute to the themes and ambitions of the Plan for North Lanarkshire and linked strategies in multiple ways and could contribute more with appropriate support, recognition and funding. Delivery of the objectives and linked activities set out below will help the NL CVS develop and contribute more.



3.2.3 National Context

The national Scottish context for NL's community and voluntary sector includes a wide range of positive and supportive policies and resources framed by the National Performance Framework (NPF), which includes commitments to inclusive and sustainable economic development, human rights and equality and empowered people and communities, supported by a range of linked legislation, policy and funding on key issues including:

- climate change and environment, including biodiversity; energy; green space; transport; waste;
- Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 - which supports active citizenship through the right to own community assets, participatory budgeting and involvement in community planning
- COVID 19 recovery plans
- CVS and volunteering, including:
 - Funding for Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs) - local CVS umbrella bodies like VANL - in each local authority area
 - Social Enterprise Strategy and funding
 - Volunteering Strategy and funding
- digital infrastructure and inclusion
- economic development
- education and skills
- housing

4. Section Four: Strategic Plan for North Lanarkshire's Community and Voluntary Sector

4.1 Vision

A vibrant and effective North Lanarkshire Community and Voluntary Sector that works together, with residents and in partnership with the statutory and business sectors, to improve sustainable quality of life, wellbeing and equality for the people of North Lanarkshire.



4.2 Mission/Aim

To strengthen and increase sustainability of the North Lanarkshire Community and Voluntary Sector so it is better able to provide support and services which improve sustainable quality of life, wellbeing and quality for the people of North Lanarkshire.

4.3. Values

4.3.1 Sustainable Quality of Life and Well-being

The NL CVS is committed to promoting and supporting sustainable and fair quality of life and well-being of North Lanarkshire's people and communities, spanning environmental, economic and social issues.

By sustainable we mean within the limits of our natural resources.

By fair we mean socially and economically inclusive to promote equality and reduce inequality.

4.3.2 Inclusion, Equality and Human Rights

The NL CVS is committed to promoting and advancing social, economic and environmental inclusion, equality and human rights for the people of North Lanarkshire and within their own organisation and with partners.

4.3.3 Community-based and Involved

The NL CVS is committed to providing support to residents within local communities with meaningful community involvement, including community-led organisations and initiatives.

4.3.5 Collaboration and Partnership

The NL CVS is committed to working effectively across the sector as a whole and with the statutory and business sectors to provide added value and help achieve shared goals which benefit the people and communities of North Lanarkshire.

4.3.6 Respect and Consideration for Others

The NL CVS is committed to being respectful, considerate and caring towards the people and communities of North Lanarkshire; other organisations within the CVS; those working within the CVS in both paid and voluntary roles; its statutory and business partners.



4.3.7 Commitment to Excellence

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

4.4 Objectives and Activities

4.4.1 Objective One: Strengthen the Funding and People Resources of the Community and Voluntary Sector so they are able to respond to local needs more effectively

This will include:

- agreement of NLP partners to a strategic investment principles and approaches for the NL CVS
- support to help NL CVS organisations diversify their income sources, including grant funding; public fundraising; corporate sponsorship; and trading
- through improved funding, helping the NL CVS pay its paid workforce fairly (at least at the living wage with provision to pay cost of living in line with inflation) - helping the CVS recruit and retain its staff
- improving access to free and/or affordable training for the sector's paid and volunteer workforce
- increasing the number of volunteers and volunteer hours provided through the sector, including employer-supported volunteering

4.4.2 Objective Two: Strengthen Community and Voluntary Sector Communication and Collaboration

Support sharing of information, consultation and collaboration across the NL CVS through:

- digital communications Working Together for a Better North Lanarkshire
- Ebulletins and social media
- the CVSPG and CVS NL-wide and local thematic networks and forums
- seminars and annual conference.



4.4.3 Objective Three: Strengthen NL CVS Engagement and Influence in Key Partnerships

- Develop and communicate CVS views on key issues, supported by activities in objective one.
- Support effective NL CVS representation on the North Lanarkshire Partnership Board; nine Community Boars and linked sub-groups.
- Support effective NL CVS representation on other partnership initiatives such as Children's Services Partnership; Community Justice Partnership; Health and Social Care NL.
- Support CVS involvement in the development, delivery and evaluation of partnership projects and programmes, such as the Community Solutions programme.

4.4.4 Objective Four: Strengthen Understanding and Recognition of the Community and Voluntary Sector

- Support the NL CVS to improve evaluation of the benefits, outcomes, impact and value of its activities and to promote these to statutory partners, funders and the public.

4.5 Delivery and Evaluation

Delivery and evaluation of this Strategy will be supported by:

- Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire
- Members of NL CVSPG and CVS sector thematic networks
- Colleagues in statutory organisations including Community Learning and Development and Health Improvement staff

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